U.S. Department of Education ❋ Office of Inspector General

Protect Yourself from Student Loan Debt Relief Scams

Fraudsters prey on college graduates and their desire to pay down or consolidate student loan debt. The impact of their scams can be severe—your identity stolen, credit cards and loans taken out in your name, bank account zeroed out, credit score ruined. That's why the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General (OIG) encourages you to take these simple steps to protect yourself and your personal information.

1 Protect Your Personal Info and Passwords

- Don't share your FSA ID or other password with anyone—even people who say they work at your alma mater or your student loan servicing company.
- Always use strong, unique passwords, and don't store passwords where other people can see them.

2 Be Wary of Companies that Promise Student Loan Relief—for a Fee

- If a company asks you to pay for any Federal student loan services, it may be a scam. There's nothing these companies can do that you can't do for yourself—for free. Learn more about student loan debt relief scams and how to avoid them from the U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid office.
- Get the facts on Federal student loan repayment, consolidation, and forgiveness right from the source: the U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid office.
- Don't give out your personal information over the phone or email unless you initiated the contact.

3 Don't Get Hooked by Phishing Scams

- Beware of emails from vague sender names like "Student Loan Department" or "Financial Aid Office." If no additional information is provided (like the name of a school or company), it's likely a scam.
- Stay on top of student loan scams and learn how to avoid them by visiting Federal Student Aid, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and the Federal Trade Commission.
- Don't click on links or attachments embedded in emails from unknown sources.

4 Think You've Been Hacked? Act!

- Contact Federal Student Aid and your loan servicer to tell them what happened.
- Contact the credit reporting agencies and freeze your account so nobody else can open new credit or bank accounts in your name.
- Contact the OIG Hotline and share a copy of the email, text, or phone number related to the call you received!

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General is responsible for identifying fraud, waste, abuse, and other criminal activity involving Federal education programs, operations, and funding. For more information about us, visit our website at www.ed.gov/oig, and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.