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FRAUD TIP OF THE WEEK
Scholarship Telemarketing Fraud Scheme
By Detective Paul Henninger

The Department of Education has issued an alert regarding a telemarketing fraud scheme. Persons claiming to be from the Department of Education are calling students and offering them scholarships or grants. These callers request a bank or credit card account number, saying the information will be used to charge a processing fee of \$249. If you have given out your financial information because of this scholarship scam, immediately:

1. Contact your bank or credit card company, explain the situation, and close your account. If the thieves have not already attacked your account, or identity, they will.
2. Report the incident to the police. Ask for a report number, you will need it later. Ask for information about Identity Theft and how to reduce your chances of further financial losses. If you gave out your name and date of birth and/or social security number, you need to contact one of the three Credit Bureaus to put a fraud alert on your credit history.
3. Report the fraud to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Inspector General hotline at 1-800-647-8733 or oig.hotline@ed.gov.
4. File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission. The FTC provides brochures, affidavit forms and a telephone hotline to assist you. Notify the FTC by calling 1-877-382-4357 or their Internet site of www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams/.
5. Learn about Identity Theft. Visit the Federal Trade Commission website on Identity Theft at www.ftc.gov/idtheft. If you do not have Internet access, visit your local police department for information.

TIPS:

- Telephone Fraudsters make **unexpected** calls to their victims.
- Never give out your personal information to anyone who makes an unsolicited call or sends you an unsolicited e-mail.
- Fraudsters like to offer you quick or easy money. They almost always ask for you to pay a fee in advance.
- They want you to give out your personal information before you have a chance to think about it.
- They commonly represent themselves as a fraud investigator.
- They sometimes represent themselves as a police officer or government employee.
- Your bank or credit card company already has your personal information and will **never** make an unsolicited call to you and ask for it.
- If you are foolish enough to call them back, **DO NOT** use the number they give you. Verify who they are before you call. Look up the number yourself.
- Fraudulent telephone solicitors are trying to sell you something you probably do not want, or they are out to steal your money or identity.
- If it is “too good to be true,” it is a “SCAM.”
- Finally, “Stranger Danger.” You would not let a stranger in your home--do not talk to one on the phone. Interrupt and hang up.