

# Better Business Bureau warns college students to be wary of financial aid scams

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) serving Alaska, Oregon, and Western Washington is warning college-bound students and their parents to be wary of financial aid scams. Deceitful companies involved in financial aid scams promise big bucks for college tuition, but ultimately take your money and leave you with nothing.

In recent years, consumer complaints against scholarship, loan and grant services to the BBB have risen significantly. In 2006 alone, consumer complaints against these services to BBBs across the U.S. increased by 60 percent.

"Funding a college education is expensive, and finding money for college can be an intimidating process," said Robert Andrew, president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving Alaska, Oregon and Western Washington. "The fallout from this year's student loan scandal, combined with the efforts of tireless scammers, means there is a real trust crisis in the financial aid industry. There are many deceitful scammers and businesses taking advantage of overwhelmed parents who are just trying to put their child through school."

Although there are several different types of loan and grant scams out there, following are two common types:

## FINANCIAL AID SEMINAR SCAMS

College-bound students receive e-mails from companies like "College Money Matters" stating they've been accepted to attend a free financial aid seminar. The seminar essentially ends up being a sales pitch and, for a fee, the company offers to submit the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form and find college scholarships and grants for the student.

Victims of this type of scam who contacted the BBB reported they paid between \$700 and \$1,000 and never

heard from the company again. Not only did they not receive the promised services, many discovered that the FAFSA form was never even filed.

## COLLEGE GRANT SCAMS

Students receive e-mails or letters stating they qualify for free private or government grant money as financial aid. The grant is then sent to the student in the form of a check with instructions to deposit the check into their account and then wire a small amount of the money back to cover processing fees. Ultimately, the checks end up being counterfeit and victims end up having to pay the bank back for the withdrawn money on top of losing their own money, which was wired to the scammers.

To avoid becoming a victim of scholarship scams, the BBB offers the following tips:

- Avoid being duped by claims like "the scholarship is guaranteed or your money back." These guarantees often have so many conditions and strings attached that it is almost impossible for consumers to get their money back.

- If you are looking for scholarship information, don't believe the line, "You can't get this information anywhere else." Scholarship information is widely available in books and pamphlets from libraries and financial aid offices, as well as on the Internet.

- Only you and your child, not a third party, can and should provide the financial information needed to complete financial aid forms.

- If you receive a letter or e-mail claiming you have won a scholarship, make sure it is one your student actually applied for. If you never applied in the first place, there is no way you could have won.

- Never hand over personal information, including Social Security numbers,

account number, or credit card numbers. This is never a requirement for a legitimate scholarship offer. Also, a legitimate scholarship never requires payment.

For more information on scholarship and grant scams, as well as to get a reliability report on a specific company, go to [www.thebbb.org](http://www.thebbb.org) or call 503-212-3022 in Oregon. In Washington call 206-431-2222 or 253-830-2924.

Honoring Workers this Labor Day

**DENNIS O'MALLEY**  
Attorney at Law

Representing union members for more than  
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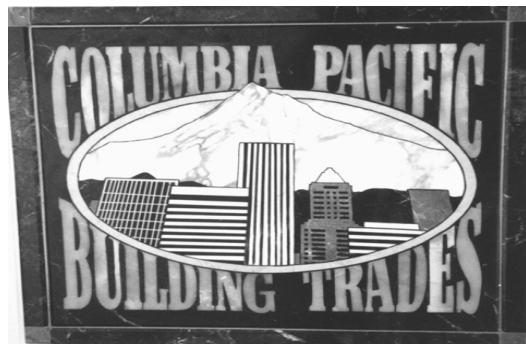
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# Labor Day Greetings!

On this holiday set aside specifically for workers — and established by the efforts of organized labor — the members, officers and staff of IBEW Local 48 wish everyone a well-deserved day of rest.



**IBEW Local 48**  
**15937 NE Airport Way**  
**Portland, Ore. 97230**  
**503- 256-4848**



**Labor Day is a special day set aside for workers.**  
**We offer best wishes for safe and prosperous**  
**times to our many friends in the labor movement.**

**COLUMBIA-PACIFIC BUILDING &**  
**CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL**  
**3535 SE 86TH PORTLAND, ORE. 97266**  
**503 774-0546**

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*Floor Coverers*

*Glass Workers*

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*On Behalf of the Staff of the*  
***International Union of Painters and***  
***Allied Trades District Council No. 5,***  
*We Salute all the Working Men and Women in*  
***Organized Labor this Labor Day 2007***

*Serving Oregon, Washington and Idaho*

*Sign Painters*

*Paint Makers*

*Truck Painters*

*Stripers*