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DATCP/DWD NEWS RELEASE: Full-Time Scammers Target Part-Time Job Seekers

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MADISON – With summer around the bend, the seasonal job hunt is underway for many Wisconsin high school and college students. As potential applicants gear up to fire off their applications, the Wisconsin Departments of Workforce Development (DWD) and Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) advise job seekers to be vigilant regarding questionable job postings, particularly those featuring "too-good-to-be-true" employment offers or those asking for upfront payment for training or materials.

“Phony job postings could be ploys to gather personal information from applicants or to sign them up for fake check scams, ‘get rich quick’ schemes, and bogus work-at-home or mystery shopping opportunities,” said Lara Sutherlin, Administrator for DATCP’s Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. “Be very careful about the amount and type of personal information you share in response to an online job listing and be informed about common employment scams before you begin your job search.”

DWD operates JobCenterofWisconsin.com, the State's free online public labor exchange that connects talent with opportunity and currently has over 100,000 job postings. While DWD strives to validate the identity of all employer representatives who post jobs directly on the site, users are also advised to use caution if they opt to search external sites from JobCenterofWisconsin.com.

"At the Job Center of Wisconsin, trust in the quality of offerings is paramount to our mission," DWD Division of Employment & Training Division Administrator Chytania Brown said. "We work hard to ensure that registered job seekers and employers are provided opportunity free from fraud. We still advise visitors to our site to carefully examine all online activities."

DWD and DATCP offer the following tips to help students protect themselves when they seek seasonal jobs on any job search/placement website:

- It is not common or normal practice for an employer to ask for your personal information, such as your Social Security number and bank account number (or similar personal financial information) on an initial application. Be wary and use good judgment if unusual information is requested.
- Be suspicious of any job offer that requires an upfront fee. Do not provide credit card or bank account numbers and be careful of requests for payment by wire transfer.
- Any “job” that requires you to cash a check and send any amount of it to another party is a scam.
- Be cautious when dealing with any contacts outside of the United States. If the job offer is a scam, it is difficult to pursue enforcement action against a person located outside of this country.

- Research an organization before making any commitments. Ask for information about the company, including its street address and the name of its owner or chief operating officer. You may wish to call DATCP's Consumer Protection Hotline (800-422-7128) to check on complaints against the business.
- Get the job offer in writing, including any earnings you are expected to make.
- If the interview request or job offer is for a job you did not apply for, it is most likely a scam.
- Scammers often send "spoofed" emails with forged email headers that make the messages appear to have originated from someone or somewhere other than the actual source. If the web address (URL) referenced in the sender's email address does not match the true URL for the business in question, the email may be a scam. The official email address for the Job Center of Wisconsin is JobCenterofWisconsin@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

A common employment scam to watch out for begins with an email request for a "Google Hangout" interview for a work-at-home position. The scammer fraudulently uses a legitimate company name and claims to have found the job seeker's resume on an online employment site. After a job offer is made during the "interview," the job seeker is sent a check or money order for "office supplies and equipment," is instructed to deposit it into their personal account, and is told to buy expensive equipment from a particular vendor. Unfortunately, the check or money order are fake and the job seeker will be on the hook for the full amount of money withdrawn when the bank discovers the fraud.

(NOTE: Some legitimate organizations do conduct interviews for work-from-home positions using tools like Google Hangouts, but they do not require purchases or up-front payments.)

For additional information on job opportunities in Wisconsin, visit the [Job Center of Wisconsin website](#). A number of DATCP fact sheets relating to job scams can be found on the agency's [consumer fact sheets webpage](#) under the "Employment" heading.

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