



TEXAS AG WARNS OF BOGUS JOB OFFERS

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

CONSUMERS SHOULD BE ALERT to several bogus employment offers that have been circulating online and in classified newspaper advertisements over the past several weeks. Individuals posing as recruiters or employers are pitching attractive employment opportunities that all contain the same catch: the job seeker must pay money in advance for travel or other out-of-pocket expenses or provide confidential information such as bank account numbers and Social Security numbers. Requirements like these should send up a red flag to the job seeker that this may be an employment scam.

For example, we have fielded complaints from unemployed flight attendants who answered newspaper ads for employment and were told that they would have to travel to an exotic location for an interview. Applicants were instructed to send half the cost of their airfare, supposedly to cover their travel expenses and ensure that they were serious applicants. They were

told that the money would be reimbursed. However, the interview was cancelled, the trip never took place and the money was never refunded.

In a similar scheme, classified ads looking for mystery shoppers have cost unsuspecting consumers thousands of dollars. After responding to the ad, job seekers received a cashier's check in the mail and a letter of congratulations with instructions to cash the check and send it to an address out of the country. The checks turned out to be bogus, and victims had difficulty recouping their losses.

In another case, a woman responded to an advertisement for an office assistant position she found in a Houston newspaper. After sending the "company" an email in response to their ad, the woman was directed to a website, where she was asked to provide personal information, including her address, Social Security number, and bank account number.

In July, my office was warned about a fraudulent solicitation for bookkeepers that appeared on a popular online community website. The advertisement instructed job seekers to open a bank account for company executives to deposit money for air fares and other work-related fees. In other words, job seekers were asked to help these con artists establish a gateway for identity theft and possible money laundering!

I urge you to exercise caution when answering ads for employment anytime you are asked to pay money up front. Most reputable companies will absorb these costs themselves if they are the ones seeking the employee. Legitimate employers seldom ask for large sums of money from applicants. At a minimum, find out about the company from an independent source of information before you make arrangements to spend money to travel to an interview or provide sensitive personal information online.

POINTS TO REMEMBER



BEWARE OF BOGUS JOB OFFERS

- Be wary of unsolicited job offers that arrive through email.
- Verify the identifying information of the company with which you are applying, including telephone numbers, fax numbers, and main address.
- Deal only locally and do not trust offers from outside the area, especially overseas.
- Never trust a company or individual that requires you to pay advance fees up front to find work.
- Be wary of requests for sensitive personal information.



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