



Government of the Virgin Islands
of the United States

Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DLCA WARNS OF SOCIAL MEDIA "GRANT PROGRAM SCAM"

(U.S. Virgin Islands) – The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) warns the community of scammers who may contact them on social media messaging platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to participate in a fictitious government grant program.

The scammer attempts to start a conversation by impersonating a public figure, politician, and sometimes even friend on a social media messaging platform. At some point, in the conversation, they will ask you if you've heard of some fictitious grant program. The scammer will tell you that they have benefited from this government grant program and recommend you contact the "Claims Agent". Typically, the individual will use poor grammar, become aggressive if you question them, or tell you that there is limited time to participate in the program.

If you are targeted by any of these scammers, immediately report the account to the platform's fraud department and block the contact.

According to HHS.gov, no legitimate federal government employee would ever call you and tell you that you qualify or have been approved for a grant for which you never applied. Below are some tell-tale signs that you are being scammed:

Look and listen for these tell-tale lines:

- "This grant/scholarship is guaranteed or your money back."
- "You can't get this information anywhere else."
- "I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this grant/scholarship."
- "We'll do all the work. You just pay a processing fee."
- "The grant/scholarship will just cost you a one-time fee."
- "You've been selected" or "you are eligible" to receive a grant/scholarship.

Quick Facts about the Government Grant Process

- Government grant applications and information about them are free.
- The names of agencies and foundations that award grants are available for free at any public library or on the Internet.



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www.dlca.vi.gov

- The only official access point for all federal grant-making agencies is www.grants.gov.
- There are no fees associated with applying for a government grant.
- ALL government grants involve an application process to carry out projects with a public purpose and are not intended for personal use.
- You will not be contacted by the government to make you pay for a grant.

This is not an all-inclusive list but generally, these scammers all follow similar scripts. For more information on protecting yourself and avoiding grant scams, visit HHS.gov by selecting the following link <https://www.hhs.gov/grants/grants/avoid-grant-scams/index.html>

For consumer-related issues, you may email DLCA at consumerawareness@dlca.vi.gov or call the Consumer Affairs Division at 340.713.3522 on St. Croix, 340.714.3522 on St. Thomas, or St. John at 340.693.8036. Follow us on Facebook at @dlcausvi.