

To: All SEVIS users
Date: May 6, 2015
Re: SEVIS I-901 Fee Fraud Alert
Number: 1505-03

Comments

To comment on this Broadcast Message, please email SEVP@ice.dhs.gov with “Broadcast Message 1505-03 Comment” entered in the subject line.

General Information

Recently, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) became aware that scammers are targeting students in the Chicago area in an attempt to solicit funds on behalf of the I-901 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee. Scammers are requesting those targeted to send up to \$4,000 to avoid deportation. The scammers are using the ‘Location Services’ app on students’ cellular devices to find the students’ location and threaten them with continued pursuit if they do not receive the money. The incidents are currently under investigation by the Chicago Police Department and SEVP intends to cooperate fully and will provide additional information as it becomes available.

Coincidentally, these fraud incidents began after SEVP sent out the first batch of I-901 Non-Payment letters in mid-April. The I-901 Non-Payment letters request that students in active status, with no I-901 payment on their record, pay the I-901 Fee. The letter also states that failure to remit the payment within the time allotted will result in the termination of the student’s SEVIS record and/or possible deportation.

Below, please refer to the detailed instructions when handling any future fraud incidents, should they arise:

Red Flag 1

Students should disregard any phone call from a person attempting to collect an I-901 Fee on behalf of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and SEVP. The process that SEVP has in place for the collections of unpaid I-901 Fees does not involve contacting students via phone to threaten or request money.

Red Flag 2

Additionally, scammers are reportedly requesting up to \$4,000 in I-901 Fees; an I-901 Fee is \$200 at the most. The only time the requested Fee will be more is if a student has a returned check. The additional amount would be limited to small, related service charges for bank processing.

What to do if your student receives this type of phone call?

Students should not give any information to the person on the phone, nor should they send any funds to the scammers. Those targeted need to immediately call their local Police Department and contact their school official to report the incident to SEVP.

School Officials

If you receive any incident reports or information that aids in this investigation, please contact the SEVP Response Center immediately at 703-603-3400 or 1-800-892-4829 between the hours of 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET or email SEVP@ice.dhs.gov.

The safety and well-being of all program participants is of the utmost importance to SEVP. We assure you, we are working diligently with law enforcement to eradicate this issue and find those responsible.

Disclaimer

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