

\$CHOLARSHIP \$CAMS

Maintain a watchful eye for scholarship scams. Here are some tips to remember.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) cautions students to look for statements such as:

“The 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 scholarship.”

“You’ve been selected by a ‘national foundation’ to receive a scholarship.”

“You’re a finalist” in a contest you never entered.

“We’ll do all the work.”

Other tips:

If you have to pay money to get money, it’s probably a scam. Many scams encourage you to send money up front, but provide little or nothing in exchange.

Be wary of a scholarship that requires an application fee.

Legitimate companies never guarantee or promise scholarships or grants.

“First come, first served.” While you do need to get your application in before the scholarship deadline, the “first come, first served” rule does not apply to scholarships.

If you attend a seminar on financial aid or scholarships, follow these steps:

Take your time. Don't be rushed into paying at the seminar. Avoid high-pressure sales pitches that require you to buy now or risk losing out on the opportunity. Solid opportunities are not sold through nerve-racking tactics.

Investigate the organization you're considering paying for help. Talk to a guidance counselor or financial aid advisor before spending your money. You may be able to get the same help for free.

Be wary of "success stories" or testimonials of extraordinary success - the seminar operation may have paid "shills" to give glowing stories. Instead, ask for a list of at least three local families who've used the services in the last year. Ask each if they're satisfied with the products and services received.

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them.