



CONNECT FOR SUCCESS

An Oswego County Workforce New York Newsletter

Work From Home: How to Avoid Getting Scammed



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Special points of interest:

- * Oswego County Workforce New York has computer labs for updating your resume and searching for jobs.
- * Many workshops are available to assist you with your job search.
- * Our staff are ready to help you!

Article by: Megan Coleman; CNY Central

If you've ever spotted a job posting promising to allow you to work from home, be aware, it could be a scam. Some online job ads offer the opportunity to work from home for money, but how many of these jobs are simply too good to be true?

One job seeker was browsing Craigslist for work-at-home opportunities when an ad for a "personal assistant" caught her eye. It promised up to \$300 per task. When the job seeker responded, they were instructed to communicate via instant messaging with a person who identified themselves as the "hiring manager."

The job seeker was told that they would be sent advance money to buy office supplies. Sure enough, the next day an overnight package arrived with a check for \$2,700. When the check was taken to the bank to be cashed, the bank recognized the check as fraudulent. "These are called advance fee scams," says Robert Rebhan, a retired LAPD Detective whose company specializes in combating financial crimes.

Here's how it works: Rebhan says the scammer sends a check that is nominally more than the cost of home office supplies the applicant is instructed to buy. In many cases the bank doesn't immediately detect the check is fraudulent, and the victims not only go out and make the purchases, but they then follow the scammer's instructions to send back the balance. Eventually, the bank realizes the initial advance check is bogus. But the job seekers who spent the money are left on the hook. The scammer's profit per con can range from a few hundred dollars to more than \$1,000.

The particular ad seen by this job seeker has since been pulled, but the internet is rife with countless others using this scam. Another way scammers try to fool job seekers is by pretending to be with a legitimate company, such as in this case the scammer "worked" for Reliance Health Ventures of Mumbai, India. When researched, they have a really nice website, but of course, there is no connection.

Rebhan estimates 98 percent of online work-at-

home pitches are fraudulent, and advises job seekers to be wary. "Consumers need to do a little work before they get involved with it," Rebhan said. "Do an investigation, and see if you can reach a person by phone."



Rebhan also suggests those seeking work at home jobs first check with the Federal Trade Commission and the World Privacy Forum. WorkatHomeMoms offers reviews of companies offering work at home employment.

Above all, Rebhan says you really have to be careful when the online solicitation comes from overseas.

For its' part, Craigslist does not try to individually vet or police the multitude of ads that are placed on its service. But like Monster.com and other online job seeker services, Craigslist warns its users of the potential for fraud and posts advice. "Deal locally with folks you can meet in person," is right at the top of the list on the Craigslist webpage offering "Personal Safety Tips." The page goes on to state, "Follow this one rule, and you can avoid 99 percent of scam attempts on Craigslist."

In some cases Rebhan has seen, the scam is designed not only to victimize work-at-home applicants, but also to dupe them into serving as a "money mule" for the scammer. Such schemes begin with an internet criminal hacking into the computer system that accesses the bank accounts of a small to mid-size company.

During hours when the business is closed, the criminal hacker transfers money from the company to the bank account of one of the persons it has recruited through a bogus work-at-home ad. In some cases they are told they are working for an overseas charitable organization. They're instructed to take a fee of about 10 percent and transfer the rest overseas. Within days, the illegal transfer is detected and authorities quickly locate the "money mule", but it's often not possible to recover the money if it's already been sent overseas.

For safety purposes, always do your homework before signing up for any work-at-home positions.

Conduct An Inventory Of Success To Get Back On Track

Most of us sometimes fall into the trap of undervaluing our achievements. No matter what we've achieved, on a bad day we can easily view our lives as a series of failures and disappointments. But you don't have to surrender to negativity.

When you start feeling like a has-been, step back and make a list of your accomplishments. Examine four categories:

- **Education.** Review the classes you've completed, the degrees you've earned, and your professional certifications.
- **Professional positions.** List every major job you've ever held, along with duties and authority you had.
- **Projects.** Look at every project you've been involved in that met with success because of your contributions.
- **Accomplishments.** Note every career achievement: awards, promotions, significant praise from superiors, and so forth, along with its importance to your organization the community, your family, and yourself.



Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Want To Get Promoted? Don't Wait To Be Asked

Most people don't want to spend their entire career in the same job, for the same pay, with the same level of responsibility. But getting promoted isn't automatic. You've got to show that you want it, and that you deserve it. Here's how to prepare and position yourself for advancement:

- **Decide on what you want.** "A promotion" is nebulous. You've got to target the specific job you want so you can start working toward it. Be realistic; if you work in the mailroom, you're not likely to immediately win a VP's job.
- **Do a stellar job.** The bare minimum isn't enough. You'll get noticed if you make a practice of going above and beyond your job description. Work harder than anyone else, take some initiative, and get results.
- **Be a team player.** Support your co-workers, your manager, and your organization. You've got to show that you're ready for the responsibility of leading other people, and you can't do that if

you get a reputation as a lone wolf.

- **Invest in your own development.** Don't wait around for your boss to send you to a training seminar. Find out what skills you need in order to do the job, then go ahead and learn them. You'll show your commitment to improvement, and you'll get the benefit of increasing your knowledge no matter what happens.
- **Talk to your manager.** Let your boss know that you're interested in advancement. Don't be pushy or demanding, but send the message that you're ready for more responsibility, and ask what you can do to be considered for promotion.
- **Solve problems.** The best way to get noticed is to solve problems for your organization quickly and creatively. Be on the lookout for situations where you can help your colleagues and the organization with ideas and knowhow. The ability to provide useful solutions will help you stand out.

Be Ready For Tough Questions When You Seek A Promotion

If you're looking for a promotion at work, be prepared to answer the same sorts of question you'd get at a traditional job interview. You'll need to think on your feet and intelligently discuss your goals, aspirations, and work skills. Here are three key questions to be ready for:

- **What would you do differently if you could start over again?** Don't go negative. Try to reinforce a positive image of yourself by choosing a work-related decision that you made early in your professional life, and then focus on a minor error that you've since recognized.
- **How would you rate your performance?** Don't be

squeamish about self-promotion. In a job interview you should brag. Rate yourself at the top. If you don't believe in yourself how can you expect your employer to believe in you?

- **Discuss your biggest strength and greatest weakness.** Refer to one of your recent accomplishments listed on your resume when talking about your strengths. When you have to name a weakness, be careful not to sabotage your chances. Suggest a flaw that's not too damning, and don't go overboard with weakness—that's-really-a-strength ploy (like being a perfectionist) that executives are likely to see through right away.

Oswego County Workforce New York Workshop Schedule

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2 Center Closed HAPPY NEW YEAR	3 RSO – UI Orientation	4 9:00-4:00 Furthering Your Education 9:30-11:30 Interview Skills 101 1:30-2:30 What You Don't Know...	5 9:30-11:30 Successful Resume Writing 2:00-3:00 Difficult Interview Questions	6 9:30-11:30 Advanced Resume Review
9 RSO – UI Orientation	10 9:00-10:00 Winning Applications 9:00-12:30 Word Session I 1:30-4:30 Excel Session I	11 9:00-12:00 WIA Overview 9:30-11:30 Interview Skills 101	12 9:00-12:30 Word Session II 9:30-10:30 What Employers Want 10:30-12:00 Metrix 1:30-4:30 Excel Session II	13
16 Center Closed MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY	17 RSO – UI Orientation	18 9:00-12:00 WIA Overview 9:00-12:00 QuickBooks Session I 9:30-11:30 Successful Resume Writing 1:00-4:00 QuickBooks Session II 1:30-4:00 Advanced Resume Review	19 9:00-10:00 Understand Civil Service 9:30-10:30 Transferable Skills 1:30-2:30 Job Zone	20 9:30-11:30 Online Apps / Testing
23 RSO – UI Orientation	24 9:00-10:00 Winning Applications 9:30-11:30 Lost Your Job... 1:30-3:30 Mature Worker Job Search	25 9:00-12:00 WIA Overview 9:00-12:30 Word Session I 9:30-11:30 Interview Skills 101 1:30-2:30 What You Don't Know... 1:30-4:30 PowerPoint	26 9:30-11:30 Successful Resume Writing 1:30-3:00 Metrix 1:30-3:30 Personality & Careers	27 9:00-12:30 Word Session II 1:30-4:30 Intro to Computers
30 RSO – UI Orientation	31 9:30-11:30 Job Search Forum 2:00-3:00 Understand Civil Service	28	29	For info or to sign up please call– 591-9000

- ◆ **Access 2007-Design** databases to track and report information. Learn to query, organize, retrieve & share data. Knowledge of Word or Computers req.
- ◆ **Advanced Resume Writing**-Resume required. The group reviews it and offers suggestions on ways to enhance it. Current resume required.
- ◆ **Difficult Interview Questions**-Review of potential jobseeker answers to difficult interview questions.
- ◆ **Excel 2007**-Build spreadsheets for analyzing data and making projections. Learn to develop graphs, charts and formulas. Knowledge of Word or Computers req.
- ◆ **Furthering Your Education**-Exploration of different financial aid and funding that can assist you in lifelong learning.
- ◆ **Internet Job Search**-Learn to locate and research employers, advantages/disadvantages of job banks. Computer skills and a resume are required.
- ◆ **Interview Skills 101**-Suggestions to prepare for a successful job interview and interview phases will be discussed.
- ◆ **Job Search Forum**-Don't know where to look for work, losing motivation or in need of search tips? Come in and ask questions and get some answers.
- ◆ **Job Zone**-An interest inventory that will give you insight into your next career.
- ◆ **Keyboarding**-Basics of Keyboarding. Increase your typing speed and decrease your frustration using fun computer software.
- ◆ **Lost Your Job & Attitude?**-What does attitude have to do with getting a job? Are you feeling frustrated, angry or depressed? Learn to recognize if you are stuck or self destructing yourself, and realize that you are not alone.
- ◆ **Mature Worker Job Search**-Discuss the many positive contributions made by mature experienced workers, review the hiring process as well as marketing strategies in a highly competitive job market.
- ◆ **Microsoft Word 2007**-Learn to prepare, modify, save documents. Includes formatting text, working with toolbars and inserting graphic and clipart. Some typing skills and computer knowledge required.
- ◆ **Mock Interview**- An opportunity to experience being in an interview process. The interview will be taped and reviewed with each client. Client must dress appropriately for the mock interview and bring resume. Interview 101 required.
- ◆ **Moving Forward**-designed to assist those with a criminal record in your job search and cleaning up your record. Bonding information also discussed.
- ◆ **Online Applications & more**-Learn the do's and don'ts of online applications and also "pre-employment testing" methods used by employers to screen candidates.
- ◆ **Personality & Career**-Explore and learn about your unique personality and apply your knowledge to better your career, or even get a new one.
- ◆ **PowerPoint 2007**-Use this fun software to create great presentations. Learn to format and work with slides and to make your presentations portable.

Workshop Descriptions Cont'd.

- ◆ **QuickBooks 2007**-Learn to manage finances & run a business efficiently; work with accounts, manage inventory, record sales & process payroll. Some accounting & computer knowledge required.
- ◆ **Resume Writer**-Use the latest technology to put together your resume, and submit for job matches when done. *Recommended to have some computer skills, a USB device, and bring a detailed work history.
- ◆ **Successful Resume Writing**-An intro to resume development where the tips and tools to develop a resume and cover letter will be discussed.
- ◆ **Technology In The Job Search**-Pick up tips on how to use technology in your job search and the pitfalls to avoid.
- ◆ **Transferable Skills**-Are you reentering the job market, changing careers, facing a lay off, or a recent graduate looking for your first job? This workshop is to help you identify your transferable skills and use them to build a better resume.
- ◆ **Understanding the Civil Service System**-Get a better understanding of how to obtain employment with local and state governments and school districts.
- ◆ **What You Don't Know that You Don't Know** about jobs and careers.
- ◆ **What Employers Want**-Overview of the skills, characteristics and first impressions that employers look for in prospective employees
- ◆ **WIA Overview**- An introduction to the Workforce Investment Act and more. Must be scheduled by a staff person; required if interested in training.
- ◆ **Winning Applications**-How to get an employer to notice your application. Proper procedures, common mistakes and how to deal with more difficult questions.

Partner Agencies/
Workshops

**Oswego County
Opportunities**
www.oco.org

Oswego County BOCES
www.oswegoboces.org/
adulted/index.asp

**Cayuga Community
College**
www.cayuga-cc.edu

www.indeed.com

Did You Know...

- **Did you know...**that Oswego County's unemployment rate for October 2011 was 8.2%? This was a decrease from the September 2011 rate of 8.6%.
 - **Did you know...**that the Public Computing Center (PCC) at the Oswego Public Library offers a free computer workshop series? Just call 342-8839 to schedule a class or visit the website, <http://oswego.learninglibraries.org>, to see a complete list of classes offered.
 - **Did you know...**that you can receive the Connect for Success newsletter via e-mail?
- If you would like to have the newsletter e-mailed to you each month, just drop by or give us a call with your name and your e-mail address and we'll send the next issue of Connect for Success to your e-mail address.
- **Did you know...**that accounting students from SUNY Oswego will be available at the Oswego County Workforce New York Center in Fulton to prepare and electronically file your income taxes starting Tuesday, January 31, 2012 through April 10, 2012.

Indeed.com is a new type of job search engine which pulls job listings from a variety of sources—such as America's Job Bank, syracuse.com and monster.com. Click on Advanced Search to narrow your results by keyword, location and full or part-time.

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WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
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Oswego County Workforce New York is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

