

Whether using *Hire a Highlander* or another job or internship search source, **be an informed seeker!** This guide provides information on a current national scam as well as red flags and tips to protect yourself. Use your intuition. If an opportunity seems too easy or too good to be true, it probably is.

As you use Hire A Highlander, please contact the Career Center if you have any questions or concerns about a particular posting or to learn more about engaging in an on-line career search. 540-831-5373; [csc@radford.edu](mailto:csc@radford.edu)

---

## **ALERT: Current Money-Wiring Scams Increasing**

A new variation on an old scam is becoming more frequent: money-wiring. Whether posting positions under the name of real businesses or sending e-mails inviting students to apply for on-line work, inevitably scammers request “applicants” to deposit a check into their accounts and wire money back (less a small fee for their payment). The perpetrators of these scams can be very hard to distinguish at the outset, often taking over the identity of legitimate business. Sometimes the only clue that the employer is a scam artist is at the time they make the request. Here’s what to do if you come across this scam:

- If you receive a check, **DO NOT CASH IT**. A legitimate employer will NEVER have a reason to have you cash a check and send them money. This request is always a scam.
- Report the scam. Inform the Career Center of any employer you experience who uses this tactic, but also be aware that this kind of scam exists in many kinds of interactions, like selling items through Craig’s List.

For more information, see the [Federal Trade Commission's website on money wiring scams](#).

---

## **BE ALERT & PROTECT YOURSELF:**

**If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.** This old adage may never have been truer, particularly for job seekers. Job search scams are on the rise, so job seekers must learn to be savvy consumers of the job market with a primary focus on protecting themselves. It's not just a matter of being duped—these scams can have long-term effects on your credit rating. Use the following tips to guide you.



### **Red Flag \$ - You are asked to pay to use services or make monetary transactions.**

- Do not forward, transfer, or “wire” money to an employer or any other person/entity.
- Do not ever deposit a check, transfer money, and retain a portion for payment.
- Be wary of organizations asking you to pay up-front fees to: use recruiting services; access job listings; pay for a background check; or otherwise solicit funds from you. Access to job listings is free in most instances and legitimate hiring agencies and recruiters typically charge their clients (the employer), not the candidate.



### **Red Flag - Employer asks for private/identifying information before you have accepted a job**

- Do not share your social security number, bank or PayPal account, credit card information, or any other personally identifying information when first interacting with a potential employer. Some employers ask for a social security number on an application form. You may choose to leave that line blank and provide it, if needed, when an offer of employment is extended.



### **Red Flag - An unknown employer contacts you about an employment opportunity**

- It is generally best not to pursue opportunities from employers that come “out of the blue” if you don’t know how the employer received your contact information. If you decide to follow up:
  - Check with the Better Business Bureau or run a Google search with the organization’s name and the word “complaints” or “scam.”

- Confirm the employer's contact information: Is there a valid direct phone number associated with the company, not just a cell phone? Run "reverse look-up" on the phone number in whitepages.com.
- Does the organization have a physical location, not just a P.O. Box? Google-map the address.
- Does the email address connect to a company? **A Gmail or Yahoo account may indicate a scam.**



### Red Flag – More red flags....

- Be wary of job opportunities that provide the opportunity to earn money working from home.
- Be wary of vague offers such as "we work with major companies" or "we have thousands of jobs."
- Be wary of communications that have poor grammar, spelling errors, flawed sentence structure, and unprofessional, which may be an indication of a scam



### TIPS FOR AN ONLINE JOB SEARCH: Think about your online presence

- Be careful when posting a resume to an online job board. This passive search method may not result in a high number of employment opportunities and may inadvertently disclose personal information (address, phone number) to an unintended audience.
- Read any privacy policy associated with online job boards, especially if you decide to upload your resume. Pay attention to how long your resume will be kept online and who has the opportunity to access your resume. It's wise to ensure that you can delete your resume at any point in time.
- Be sure to keep a record of where you have posted your resume and remember to go back and delete it once you have finished your job search.
- Consider information posted by or about you on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc. and think about how prospective employers might view it. Steer clear of providing overly personal information and maintain a profile that presents positive and accurate personal content. It's always a good idea to Google-search yourself and see what comes up.



### Tip - Protect your friends and references

- Consider the information you post about your friends on social networking and other public websites. You're not posting questionable photos or information about yourself online, so use the same restraint in regards to your friends. Ask your friends to return the favor.
- Think twice about sharing your friends' contact information. If a recruiter asks for names of your friends so he or she can let them know about a "fabulous opportunity" don't assume your friends will be interested. Even if you think it's a great opportunity, your friends may not. It's always safer to provide the recruiter's contact information to your friends and let them determine if they want to get in touch.
- Protect the privacy of your references and never include their contact information in a resume posted online.

### Learn more and get help:

[Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\): Consumer Protection Resources](#)

[FTC: The Bottom Line about Multi-Level Marketing Plans](#)

[Looks Too Good To Be True.com](#)

### Think you may have been a victim of a scam, fraud, or identity theft?

[ID Theft Resource Center.org](#)

Adapted from University of Puget Sound <http://www.pugetsound.edu/about/offices-services/ces/students/job-search-resources/job-seeker-beware/> (8/29/2014)