



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

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SBA WARNS BUSINESSES OF CALLERS WHO IMPLY LINKS WITH AGENCY, SEEK FINANCIAL DATA, FEES

Businesses Contacted Asked to Notify SBA's Inspector General

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration is cautioning small businesses across the country to be wary of telephone callers who imply that they are connected with the agency and ask for privileged financial or personal data, and solicit fees for products or membership.

Businesses contacted by anyone claiming to represent a private entity identified as “SBA,” or an entity with a name suggestive of the Small Business Administration, are asked to contact the United States Small Business Administration’s Office of Inspector General, and to provide that office with the details of any such contact.

Such communications should be directed to the U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Inspector General, 409 Third Street, S.W. – Seventh Floor, Washington D.C. 20416, or (202) 205-6586 (telephone), or (202) 205-7382 (fax), or OIG@SBA.GOV (e-mail).

In recent weeks, the agency has received a number of complaints from members of the public advising that representatives of a private entity identifying itself as “SBA,” or “SBA Online,” or “Small Business Advantage” have contacted their businesses seeking to interest them in purchasing certain commercial services allegedly offered by their organization, or in paying to become members of “SBA.”

In some instances, the callers have attempted to obtain specific financial or employee data relating to the contacted business, sometimes asking the business to confirm information the caller already has. In some cases, callers have requested specific personal data, such as social security number or mother’s maiden name of the contacted individual.

The public should note that the U.S. Small Business Administration neither solicits membership fees nor contacts businesses to obtain sensitive information about small businesses or individuals unless it is part of a particular matter pending before the agency (such as a loan application).

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Small businesses contacted by an individual claiming to be a representative of “SBA,” or of an entity with a name suggestive of the U.S. Small Business Administration, should immediately ask whether that person is, in fact, employed by the U.S. Small Business Administration. A legitimate representative of the Small Business Administration will provide his or her name, confirm that he or she is employed by the agency, and provide a telephone number at the Small Business Administration which can be called with any questions. Any reluctance on the part of the individual to provide his or her name, the full identity of his or her employer, or a telephone number should be cause for suspicion.

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For more information about all of the SBA’s programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA or TDD 704-344-6640. Also, visit the SBA’s extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.

*The SBA, in co-sponsorship with Staples, has introduced an online newsletter **SBA Solutions**. For a free subscription, go to <http://web.sba.gov/list>, and select New **SBA Solutions Newsletter**.*

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