

OBERLIN

COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

Department of Human Resources

To: Oberlin College Faculty and Staff
From: Maggie Nieves, Deputy Human Resources Officer
Date: January 29, 2021
Subject: Unemployment Fraud

During the tax filing season, individuals are at increased risk of having their identities compromised. This problem impacts millions of Americans, some significantly.¹

Over the past year, unemployment filings and the expansion of jobless benefits in the wake of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in increased fraud nationwide. Employers across a number of states report receiving claims for unemployment benefits filed in the name of people who remain employed or employees who left the organization or retired years ago. Due to this surge in fraudulent claims, the College is diligently checking the legitimacy of the claims it receives.

The fraud is being fueled by people who obtain personally identifying information (PII) of an individual and use the information to apply for unemployment through the state. Criminals are using various techniques to obtain this PII, such as e-mail phishing schemes and purchasing stolen PII.

These “scams” **are not due to any breach of Oberlin College’s data.**

If Oberlin College receives notification from the State of Ohio that someone has applied for unemployment benefits under your identity, the Department of Human Resources will contact you to begin the process of reporting the claim as fraud.

In addition, the State recommends individuals report suspected fraud by calling the toll-free hotline at 1-800-686-1555 (Option 1), or going to the following link <https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/>.

Through its Employee Assistance Program, called “[Lifestyle EAP](#),” the College offers Identity Theft Recovery services. Individuals are eligible for a free consultation of up to 60 minutes with a Fraud Resolution Specialist and a free ID Theft Emergency Response Kit. To access the Lifestyle EAP website, use ID: **OC14** and password: **lifestyleeap** - - - then select the Human Resources tab, then EAP.²

In addition, there are numerous identity protection services that can also be very helpful, all varying in cost. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) also has an [Identity Protection PIN \(IP PIN\)](#) program it offers, which is a six-digit number that prevents someone else from filing a tax return using your Social Security number. The IP PIN is known only to you and the IRS and helps us verify your identity when you file your electronic or paper tax return.³

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Human Resources at 5-8430 or at human.resources@oberlin.edu.

¹ *The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)*

² *Cleveland Clinic LifeStyle EAP*

³ *United States Internal Revenue Service*