DATA BREACH

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DATA BREACH

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) is aware of a data breach incident involving unauthorized criminal access to Department information. Upon identifying the threat, the Department immediately activated its cybersecurity response protocols and took swift, decisive action to stop the unauthorized activity, contain the incident, and secure its systems.

In addition to providing the required notice of the security breach to the Office of the Attorney General pursuant to section 501.171, F.S., FLDOE is partnering with the Florida Digital Service and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement in its response to the event.

The Department remains committed to transparency and will provide additional information as verified details become available.

At this time, we believe the incident was limited to the Florida Student Financial Aid website (FloridaStudentFinancialAidSG.org) and may have impacted approximately 4.9 million individuals.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a data breach?

An unauthorized party gained access to a system or database containing company or customer information.

What happened?

On October 19, DOE staff became aware of a data breach incident involving unauthorized criminal access to the Financial Aid Website, FloridaStudentFinancialAidSG.org.

As part of our ongoing cybersecurity response, certain websites and online services may experience temporary disruptions. The Department is working to restore full functionality as quickly and safely as possible while prioritizing the protection of sensitive information.

What types of personal information were involved in the data breach?

The information potentially exposed may include Social Security numbers, first and last names, dates of birth, home addresses, phone numbers (including mobile numbers), email addresses and gender identification codes (M or F). Not all individuals were necessarily affected, and the specific information involved may vary by person. The Department continues to investigate the incident and will provide updates as additional details are confirmed.

How many people were affected by this?

At this time, potentially 4.9 million people have been affected.

If you've previously applied for financial aid in Florida, your information may have been affected. Out of an abundance of caution, we encourage you to monitor your credit reports and financial accounts. Protecting personal information remains a top priority, and we'll continue sharing updates on our website as they become available.

Is my current financial aid at risk?

No, your current financial aid is not at risk.

Could this impact my credit score or financial history?

- Access Free credit reports at www.AnnualCreditReport.com or by calling 1-877-322-8228.
- For your convenience, below is the contact information for the three major credit bureaus.
    - Equifax: 1-800-525-6285
    - Experian: 1-888-397-3742
    - TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289
- If you have further questions or need assistance, please contact us at databreach@fldoe.org.

Could this delay my financial aid disbursement or tuition payments?

No, this will not delay your financial aid disbursement or tuition payments from FLDOE.

Could this affect my eligibility for scholarships, grants, or student loans?

No, this will not affect your eligibility for scholarships, grants, or student loans from FLDOE.

Has law enforcement been notified?

Yes, law enforcement has been notified, and we are working closely as this is an ongoing criminal investigation.

What specific steps should I take right now?

FLDOE recommends the following precautions, consistent with consumer best practices:

- Monitor your financial and online accounts for suspicious activity.
- Review account statements and credit reports regularly.
- Consider placing a fraud alert or credit freeze with major credit bureaus.
- Use Federal Trade Commission resources available at: https://www.identitytheft.gov/databreach.
- Access Free credit reports at www.AnnualCreditReport.com or by calling 1-877-322-8228.
- For your convenience, below is the contact information for the three major credit bureaus.
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- If you have further questions or need assistance, please contact us at databreach@fldoe.org.

Is there a dedicated hotline or support team I can contact?

Yes. Please contact databreach@fldoe.org with any additional questions you may have.

Disclaimer: This is an ongoing criminal investigation. Information in this FAQ may be updated as additional facts become available. Please refer to official FLDOE communications or FLDOE.org/databreach for the latest updates.

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