



**State of Wisconsin**  
*Department of Financial Institutions*

Tony Evers, **Governor**

Kathy Blumenfeld, **Secretary**

**For Immediate Release:** March 2, 2021

**Wisconsin DFI and BBB Wisconsin Warn Businesses About Misleading Solicitations**

MADISON, Wis. – Today the [Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions \(DFI\)](#) and the [Better Business Bureau Serving Wisconsin \(BBB\)](#) are warning businesses about solicitations designed to look like invoices arriving through postal mail and being reported to both DFI and BBB from “WI Certificate Service.”

The solicitation is designed to look like it is from the Secretary of State and requests payment of \$72.50 for a “Certificate of Status.” The solicitation is not being sent by DFI, and the requested payment amount far exceeds the \$10 fee DFI charges to [obtain an official certificate of status online](#). The solicitation is not a valid invoice and businesses are advised to not pay it.

Buried within a paragraph on the mailing is the following sentence, which could easily be missed, “WI Certificate Service is not affiliated with any government or state agency and this is a solicitation for your business.” The address used by “WI Certificate Service” is actually a Madison UPS store and the toll-free phone number listed on the mailing is not a working number, according to BBB research. BBB’s current report on “WI Certificate Service” can be found [here](#).

“These types of solicitations can mislead consumers into overpaying for documents that businesses can obtain from DFI directly,” said DFI Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld. “Carefully review all notices received and contact DFI with questions or to purchase an official certificate of status.”

Misleading solicitations that are designed to look like invoices may contain a due date and look similar to a government form. They may even contain a logo or an entity’s ID number and business information, which can be obtained from public records.

“Businesses need to closely examine all mailings or emails that appear to be a bill,” said Jim Temmer, BBB Serving Wisconsin CEO/president. “BBB is grateful to the businesses who reported this so quickly to our office, so that we in turn could promptly get the word out publicly.”

DFI and BBB remind businesses to carefully review all solicitations, notices, and websites that offer various business filings, registrations, and copy and certification services at prices above the [required fees](#). In addition, check all businesses for free with the Better Business Bureau at [bbb.org](#). Report suspected scams and fraud to [BBB Scam Tracker](#).

To avoid falling victim to a misleading solicitation, DFI and BBB recommend businesses:

- **Have a solid internal control process for paying invoices.** Carefully check invoices against an approved vendor list prior to processing them for payment.
- **Train employees to follow internal processes** and never pay invoices before vetting them and getting authorization to pay.
- **Question any invoice that does not look familiar** and does not match an approved vendor list.

Contact DFI with questions regarding business filings, registration, certification, or other services via email at [DFICorporations@dfi.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DFICorporations@dfi.wisconsin.gov) or call (608) 261-7577. For more information on current scams, consumer laws and publications, and how to file a complaint, call the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection’s [Consumer Protection Hotline](#) toll-free at (800) 422-7128 or email [DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov).

###

Contact: [DFICommunications@dfi.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DFICommunications@dfi.wisconsin.gov)

*Office of the Secretary*

Mail: PO Box 8861 Madison, WI 53708-8861  
Courier: 4822 Madison Yards Way, Madison, WI 53705  
Voice: (608) 264-7800 Fax: (608) 261-4334 Web: [www.wdfi.org](http://www.wdfi.org)