

**PROTECTION AGENCIES LAUNCH ONLINE
CONSUMER CAMPUS TARGETING CITY'S COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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***Students Get Full Orientation on High-Tech Ripoffs,
Financial Scams, Identity Protection, and Government Resources***

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), partnering with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Northeast Regional Office, today launched Consumer Campus -- a new online resource for the City's thousands of new and returning college students - chock full with information on consumer protection, identity theft, credit card traps, and government resources. Beginning today, the City University of New York (CUNY) will distribute information about Consumer Campus to more than 200,000 students via email.

Students can log on to DCA's Consumer Campus site at www.nyc.gov/consumercampus or FTC's new Project Credit Smarts web page at www.ftc.gov/creditsmarts for more information.

"College students are easy targets for marketers and the number of offers can make you dizzy," said DCA Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra. "They have enormous buying power and spend an estimated \$170 billion a year on the newest electronics, video games, and cell phones. Consumer Campus will help New York City students highlight what's important to know when shopping online, in stores, and before plunking down their credit card on the next 'must have' item. DCA staff mediates complaints between consumers and businesses, and we're here to help. We're thrilled to partner with the FTC, and thank CUNY for spreading the word to more than 200,000 students."

"Credit cards are a student's double-edged sword -- useful to pay for school necessities, yet a hazard for those who are not credit savvy," says Barbara Anthony, the FTC's Northeast Regional Director. "Project Credit Smarts is the FTC's outreach effort to New York area college students on credit and other consumer issues, such as Identity Theft. This fall, all CUNY students will have access to the FTC's new Project Credit Smarts webpage as part of the FTC's Consumer Campus partnership with the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs. We are grateful to CUNY for recognizing the need to bring the educational tools of the FTC and New York City Department of Consumer Affairs to its students to help them become educated consumers."

"We are pleased to partner with the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Federal Trade Commission in providing this important resource for CUNY students, the majority of whom work to help pay for college," said Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. "These tools will help protect them from consumer traps and help them retain more of their hard-earned dollars for their education."

Consumer Campus outlines the following:

New York City Consumer Protection Law - the first line of defense against deceptive practices, including clear refund policies, and avoiding less than truthful advertising.

- 311 - Everything you need to know about New York City's 24-hour citizen service hotline.
- Internet Scams - From unsolicited emails, to offers that promise too-good-to-be-true deals.
- Identity Theft - What to do if it happens to you, and important tips from the FTC on how to keep personal information from landing in the wrong hands.
- Shopping for Electronics - How to make sure the items bought is really new and not refurbished, what to know about warranties, and other helpful tips when shopping for a New York bargain.

- Cell Phones - What to know before buying a new phone, signing that service agreement, and how to report reception problems in the five boroughs.
- Credit Offers - What to know about those pesky "pre-approved" credit card offers, and tips from FTC's Credit Smarts.

To request copies of Consumer Campus palm cards, call 311. To file a complaint or for more information about DCA services, call 311, or go online to www.nyc.gov/consumers.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law, as well as other related laws, at thousands of businesses throughout New York City. DCA licenses more than 60,000 businesses in 55 different categories in New York City and educates both consumers and businesses alike through free publications, community and business outreach, and other informational materials.

In addition to New York, the FTC's Northeast Region serves the residents of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont and the Virgin Islands. The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint, or to get free information on any of 150 consumer topics, call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357), or use the complaint form at <http://www.ftc.gov>. The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft, and other fraud-related complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

To file a complaint, or for copies of DCA's free consumer and business education guides, call 311 or visit DCA online at www.nyc.gov/consumers