

August 12, 2020

Office of the Attorney General  
1125 Washington Street SE  
PO Box 40100 Olympia,  
WA 98504-0100  
E-mail: [securitybreach@atg.wa.gov](mailto:securitybreach@atg.wa.gov)  
RE: Notice of Data Security Event

Dear Office of the Attorney General:

Pursuant to RCW 19.255.010(4)(c), Northeastern University hereby notifies you that the University has become aware of a breach of security concerning the personal information of residents of Washington state. As you may be aware, Blackbaud, an engagement and fundraising software service provider, recently experienced a data breach. Northeastern University uses Blackbaud-hosted services and was informed on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, by Blackbaud that Northeastern is one of hundreds of colleges, universities, and nonprofits that have been affected. Upon review of the files that the university's offices of Advancement and Alumni Relations have provided to a Blackbaud service in their course of business, our office has identified 2,602 Washington residents who may have had their full name and date of birth disclosed in an unauthorized manner by Blackbaud's incident.

All affected party names have been matched to address information in anticipation of the statute's requirement to notify affected individuals. Consistent with RCW 19.255.010(4)(c), we have provided guidance related to relevant credit reporting agencies in that notification. Additionally, the notification includes the time frame of the incident, the personal information that may have been involved, and contact information for our organization should additional information be desired by the recipient. We now are sending notice to the affected individuals. In addition to the individual notices, the university has posted a notice of the event on our Alumni Relations page [here](#).

The university takes the protection of personal information very seriously. We acted immediately according to our policies and procedures to rectify the problem by launching an internal investigation into the data provided to the service and halting any further work with the service until our confidence in their data protection safeguards can be restored. Since the incident, Blackbaud has engaged with experts to continue to monitor the situation as an extra precautionary measure, and will continue to accelerate efforts to strengthen and enhance their platform.

The university remains in regular contact with Blackbaud and will continue to monitor their response. If you have any questions about this incident, please contact

Lesley Pratt and our Advancement Services team at [le.pratt@northeastern.edu](mailto:le.pratt@northeastern.edu) or call (617) 416-3489.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Sean O'Connor  
Associate VP, CTO and Interim CISO

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### Sample of notification letters sent on August 12<sup>th</sup>

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August 12, 2020

R«AddressBlock»

Dear «First»,

On behalf of Northeastern University's Advancement and Alumni Relations offices, I am writing to notify you of a data security incident that may have involved some of your personal information. As you may be aware, Blackbaud, an engagement and fundraising software service provider, recently experienced a data breach. Northeastern University uses Blackbaud-hosted services and was informed in July by Blackbaud that Northeastern is one of hundreds of colleges, universities, and nonprofits that have been affected.

Northeastern takes the protection and proper use of your information very seriously. We are therefore contacting you as a precautionary measure to explain the incident. Please be assured that no one's credit card information, bank information, or social security details were compromised.

#### **What Happened**

Blackbaud informed us that they discovered and stopped a ransomware attack in May and, with the help of independent forensics experts and law enforcement, successfully prevented the files from being made unavailable or further disseminated beyond the original attack. During the incident, one of Northeastern's backup files containing some personal information of alumni, parents and/or donors was compromised. According to Blackbaud, they took steps to make certain the backup file was permanently destroyed. More information about the incident can be found [here](#).

Blackbaud has informed us that there is no reason to believe that any data was or will be misused or made public.

The data that the university uploaded to the service include:

- Name
- Address
- Date of Birth (only for some individuals)
- Email (only for some individuals)
- Phone Number (only for some individuals)

### **Northeastern's Response**

The university takes the protection of personal information very seriously. We acted immediately according to our policies and procedures to rectify the problem by launching an internal investigation into the data provided to the service and halting any further work with the service until our confidence in their data protection safeguards can be restored. Since the incident, Blackbaud has engaged with experts to continue to monitor the situation as an extra precautionary measure, and will continue to accelerate efforts to strengthen and enhance their platform.

### **What Should You Do**

As is always recommended, you should remain vigilant and review your account statements and credit reports regularly. If you are concerned at any point that you may have been a victim of identity theft, you may wish to place a security freeze on your credit report. To do so, you must send a written request to **each** of the three major consumer reporting agencies: Equifax ([www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)); Experian ([www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)); and TransUnion ([www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)) by regular, certified or overnight mail at the addresses below:

Equifax Security Freeze  
P.O. Box 105788  
Atlanta, GA 30348  
Phone: 1 (800) 525-6285

Experian Security Freeze  
P.O. Box 9554  
Allen, TX 75013  
Phone: 1 (888) 397-3742

Trans Union Security Freeze  
Fraud Victim Assistance Department  
P.O. Box 6790  
Fullerton, CA 92834  
Phone: 1 (800) 680-7289

The university remains in regular contact with Blackbaud and will continue to monitor their response. If you have any questions about this incident, please contact Lesley Pratt and our Advancement Services team at [le.pratt@northeastern.edu](mailto:le.pratt@northeastern.edu) or call 617-416-3489.

We apologize for the inconvenience and concern this situation may cause you. Northeastern University takes the privacy of your personal information very seriously and will continue efforts to correct the potential exposure so that it does not reoccur.

Sincerely,

Lesley Pratt  
Assistant VP Advancement Services