

'Free Program' Fees & Safety Checklist (2026)

Use this checklist before enrolling so 'free' does not turn into surprise fees or scams.

A. What to verify about costs

- Free to audit, but certificates or graded options cost extra.
- Materials may cost money (books, crafts, printing).
- In-person options may require parking or transportation costs.
- Tuition waivers can still have required student fees.

B. Scam and privacy red flags

- They demand gift cards, wire transfers, or upfront 'processing' fees.
- They request your Social Security number, banking info, or one-time codes.
- They pressure you with 'today only' threats or guaranteed promises.
- The organization has no verifiable phone number or address.

C. Questions to ask

Question	My notes
What is the total cost I could pay (fees, parking, materials, certificate)?	
What help is available if I cannot log in or I miss a class?	
What personal information do they collect, and can I opt out of marketing?	
Is the provider a library, college, nonprofit, or well-known platform?	

D. My safe enrollment steps

- I enroll using the official website (I type the address myself).
- I use a strong password and do not share one-time codes.
- I ask a trusted person for a second opinion if something feels off.

Disclaimer: This checklist is for general information only and is not legal, financial, or cybersecurity advice. Always confirm provider identity and terms on official sites and contact the organization directly if you have concerns.