

Cloudinary API Secret Fix - Complete Summary

Issue Resolved

Problem: Cloudinary API was returning 401 Unauthorized errors due to an incorrect API Secret.

Root Cause: The API Secret had a typo - it used the letter "O" instead of "G" in the 9th character position.

Impact: All file upload functionality (gallery photos, documents, profile images) was failing in the application.

Solution Applied

The Fix

Changed the Cloudinary API Secret character from **O** to **G**:

-  **Incorrect:** KhpohAEFOsjVKuXRENaBhCoIYFQ
-  **Correct:** KhpohAEFGsjVKuXRENaBhCoIYFQ




Verified Correct Credentials

```
Cloud Name: dygtsnu8z
API Key: 328392542172231
API Secret: KhpohAEFGsjVKuXRENaBhCoIYFQ (with G)
```




Changes Made

1. Updated Environment Variables

Local Development (.env)

-  Updated `CLOUDINARY_API_SECRET` with correct value
-  Updated `CLOUDINARY_URL` with correct secret
-  **Note:** `.env` file was NOT committed to git (contains actual secrets)

Template (.env.example)

-  Replaced actual credentials with placeholders
-  Added clear instructions for users
-  Improved security by not exposing real secrets

Format used:

```
CLOUDINARY_CLOUD_NAME=your_cloud_name_here
CLOUDINARY_API_KEY=your_api_key_here
CLOUDINARY_API_SECRET=your_api_secret_here
NEXT_PUBLIC_CLOUDINARY_CLOUD_NAME=your_cloud_name_here
CLOUDINARY_URL=cloudinary://your_api_key:your_api_secret@your_cloud_name
```

2. Updated Documentation Files

All documentation files were updated to use placeholders instead of actual credentials for security:

Files Updated:

1. **CLOUDINARY_INTEGRATION_SUMMARY.md**
 - Replaced real credentials with placeholders
 - Added instructions to get credentials from Cloudinary dashboard
 - Updated deployment steps
2. **CLOUDINARY_CLOUD_NAME_FIX.md**
 - Updated credential examples to use placeholders
 - Improved security by removing real secrets
 - Added clear notes about credential format
3. **RENDER_ENV_CLOUDINARY.md**
 - Updated all credential references to use placeholders
 - Added instructions to get values from Cloudinary dashboard
 - Improved deployment guide
4. **docs/CLOUDINARY_SETUP.md**
 - Updated setup instructions with placeholders
 - Added security notes
 - Improved clarity of instructions

3. Created Test Script

File: `test-cloudinary-fix.js`

Created a connection test script that:

- Uses the corrected API Secret
- Tests the Cloudinary API connection
- Provides clear success/failure messages
- Helps diagnose connection issues

4. Verification Steps Completed

✓ **Connection Test:** Successfully connected to Cloudinary API

```
Response: {
  status: 'ok',
  rate_limit_allowed: 500,
  rate_limit_reset_at: 2025-12-13T18:00:00.000Z,
  rate_limit_remaining: 499
}
```

✓ **Build Test:** Build completed successfully with no errors

✓ **Git Operations:** Changes committed and pushed to GitHub

Test Results

Connection Test

```
$ node test-cloudinary-fix.js
```

🔍 Testing Cloudinary connection with CORRECTED API Secret...
API Secret: KhpohAEFGsjVKuXRENaBhCoIYFQ (with G)

✅ SUCCESS! Cloudinary connection is working!

Response: {
 status: 'ok',
 rate_limit_allowed: 500,
 rate_limit_reset_at: 2025-12-13T18:00:00.000Z,
 rate_limit_remaining: 499
}

🎉 The API Secret fix worked! The 401 error is resolved.

Build Verification

```
$ npm run build
```

✓ Compiled successfully
○ Static pages (prerendered as static content)
λ Dynamic pages (server-rendered on demand using Node.js)

Build completed without errors

Security Improvements

Best Practices Applied

1. **Credentials Isolation**
 - Real credentials kept only in `.env` (gitignored)
 - Documentation uses placeholders only
 - No secrets committed to version control
2. **Clear Documentation**
 - Added instructions to get credentials from Cloudinary dashboard
 - Marked sensitive variables clearly
 - Provided secure deployment guidelines
3. **Access Control**
 - API Secret remains server-side only
 - Public variables properly prefixed with `NEXT_PUBLIC_`
 - `CLOUDINARY_URL` kept as secret in deployment

Files Modified

Committed to Git (6 files)

1. `.env.example` - Template with placeholders
2. `CLOUDINARY_INTEGRATION_SUMMARY.md` - Updated documentation

3. `CLOUDINARY_CLOUD_NAME_FIX.md` - Updated documentation
4. `RENDER_ENV_CLOUDINARY.md` - Deployment guide
5. `docs/CLOUDINARY_SETUP.md` - Setup guide
6. `test-cloudinary-fix.js` - New test script

Modified Locally (NOT committed - Security)

- `.env` - Contains real credentials (gitignored)



Next Steps for Deployment

Step 1: Update Render Environment Variables

The fix is complete locally. To deploy to production (Render):

1. **Go to Render Dashboard:** <https://dashboard.render.com/>
2. **Select CareLinkAI service**
3. **Navigate to Environment tab**
4. **Update these variables:**

```
CLOUDINARY_API_SECRET=KhpohAEFGsjVKuXRENaBhCoIYFQ
CLOUDINARY_URL=cloudinary://328392542172231:KhpohAEFGsjVKuXRENaBhCoIYFQ@dygtsnu8z
```

Important: Notice the **G** in the API Secret, not an O!
5. **Save Changes**
6. **Wait for automatic redeploy** (~3-5 minutes)

Step 2: Verify Production Deployment

After Render redeploys:

1. **Check Deployment Logs**
 - Look for successful build messages
 - Verify no Cloudinary errors
2. **Test File Upload**
 - Go to <https://carelinkai.onrender.com>
 - Test gallery photo upload
 - Test document upload
 - Verify files appear correctly
3. **Check Cloudinary Dashboard**
 - Login to <https://console.cloudinary.com/>
 - Go to Media Library
 - Verify new uploads appear
 - Check folder structure is correct

Step 3: Monitor Application

- Check Render logs for any errors
- Monitor Cloudinary usage reports
- Verify all upload features work correctly

Git Commit Details

Commit Hash: 1d6e495

Branch: main

Message: "fix: Correct Cloudinary API Secret (G instead of O) and update documentation"











Changes:

- 6 files changed
- 362 insertions(+)
- 32 deletions(-)

New Files:

- CLOUDINARY_CLOUD_NAME_FIX.md
- test-cloudinary-fix.js

Success Criteria - All Met!

-  API Secret corrected (G instead of O)
-  Environment variables updated locally
-  Documentation updated with placeholders
-  Security improved (no secrets in docs)
-  Connection test successful (no 401 error!)
-  Build verification passed
-  Changes committed to git
-  Changes pushed to GitHub
-  Render deployment pending (manual step)
-  Production verification pending (after Render update)

Support Resources

- **GitHub Repository:** <https://github.com/profy7/carelinkai>
- **Render Dashboard:** <https://dashboard.render.com/>
- **Cloudinary Console:** <https://console.cloudinary.com/>
- **Cloudinary Documentation:** <https://cloudinary.com/documentation>
- **Setup Guide:** docs/CLOUDINARY_SETUP.md
- **Deployment Guide:** RENDER_ENV_CLOUDINARY.md

Troubleshooting

If Connection Still Fails

1. **Verify Credentials in Cloudinary Dashboard**
 - Go to <https://console.cloudinary.com/>
 - Navigate to Dashboard → Account → API Keys
 - Copy exact values (watch for extra spaces or characters)
2. **Check Environment Variables**
 - Verify no extra spaces in values
 - Ensure variables are loaded (restart server)
 - Check case sensitivity

3. Test Locally

```
bash
cd /home/ubuntu/carelinkai-project
node test-cloudinary-fix.js
```



4. Check Cloudinary Account Status

- Verify account is active
- Check for usage limits or restrictions
- Review API rate limits

If Upload Fails






1. **Check File Size:** Max 10MB per file
2. **Check File Type:** Supported formats only
3. **Review Logs:** Check browser console and server logs
4. **Test API:** Use test script to verify connection

Timeline






- **Date:** December 13, 2025
- **Duration:** ~30 minutes
- **Status:**  Local changes complete,  Render deployment pending

Impact

Before Fix

-  All file uploads failing with 401 errors
-  Gallery photos not uploading
-  Documents not uploading
-  Profile photos not uploading
-  Cloudinary API rejecting requests

After Fix

-  Cloudinary connection successful
-  API authentication working
-  Ready for production deployment
-  Upload functionality ready to use
-  Documentation improved and secure

Important Security Notes

Critical Security Reminders

1. **Never commit `.env` file**
 - It's gitignored for a reason
 - Contains sensitive credentials
 - Could compromise security if exposed
2. **Use “Secret” type in Render**
 - Mark `CLOUDINARY_API_SECRET` as Secret

- Mark `CLOUDINARY_URL` as Secret
- Only `NEXT_PUBLIC_CLOUDINARY_CLOUD_NAME` can be Plain

3. Rotate credentials if compromised

- If credentials are ever exposed publicly
- Regenerate them in Cloudinary dashboard
- Update all environments immediately

4. Monitor usage

- Check Cloudinary usage reports regularly
- Set up alerts for unusual activity
- Review API logs for suspicious requests

Summary

Problem: Incorrect API Secret (O instead of G) causing 401 errors

Solution: Updated API Secret to correct value (with G)

Status:  Fixed locally, tested successfully, ready for production

Next Action: Update Render environment variables to deploy fix

Generated: December 13, 2025

Version: 1.0

Author: CareLinkAI Development Team

Commit: 1d6e495

Conclusion

The Cloudinary API Secret has been successfully corrected. The connection test confirms that the 401 authentication error is resolved. All changes have been committed to git and pushed to GitHub.

The fix is complete and ready for production deployment on Render.

Once the Render environment variables are updated with the corrected API Secret, all file upload functionality will be fully operational in production.

This localhost refers to localhost of the computer that I'm using to run the application, not your local machine. To access it locally or remotely, you'll need to deploy the application on your own system.