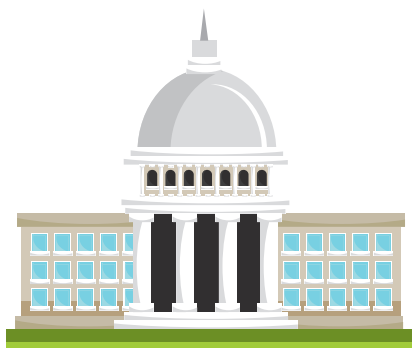





BE VIGILANT OF SCAMS



benefits and services, when accessing them, or authorizing others to do so.

Visit our site: www.va.gov/VSAFE

The Federal Trade Commission estimated that in **2022 alone**, Veterans reported **\$292M losses to fraud**, this number only represents the fraud that has been detected. **Romance & similar Internet schemes** are up **71% from 2017**. Keeping yourself safe from scams is critical when applying for

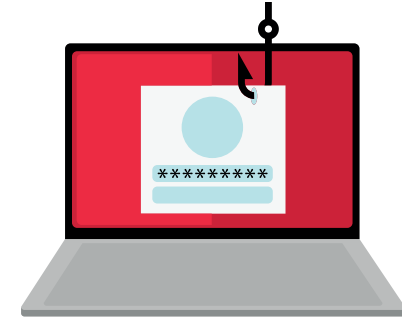
-  **Companies who advertise VA benefits** can only be obtained with their help. These companies may not be recognized by VA and may be attempting to charge illegal fees.
-  **Validate:** If you are interested in working with a Veteran Service Organization (VSO), agent, or attorney, use the Office of General Counsel Accreditation tool to confirm and validate their credentials. www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp is an official source to use to verify.
-  **Do not sign forms that are to provide “behind-the-scenes” claims assistance**

See next page for more tips about fraud prevention, help and reporting 

TIPS TO AVOID VETERAN TARGETED SCAMS

Scammers are taking advantage of new opportunities to commit fraud. There's been an increase in phishing (Email), vishing (phone), and social media scams targeting Veterans, their family members, caregivers, and survivors to access their finances and benefits, or to submit claims on their behalf.

Beware of anyone who guarantees a lucrative financial benefit or service.



DO'S

- **Submit applications securely** online on va.gov or other federal websites or in-person through Federal agencies offering a service. Those agencies will assist in gathering evidence necessary to support it. There are no costs or hidden fees to apply.
- **Be cautious of:**
 - **Aggressive companies** who may try to pressure you to sign their contract through frequent communications or by insisting "you must act now or lose your chance for benefits."
 - **Companies who claim to be contacting you on behalf of VA or to have a special relationship with VA.** Contact VA at 1-800-827-1000 if you are unsure about the authenticity of any message received.
- **Use two-factor identification, like login.gov, when available.**

DON'TS

- **Do not sign a contract agreeing to pay** an unauthorized company a percentage of your benefit payment in exchange for their assistance with your VA claim. If you need help filing a claim, there are representatives of VSOs, agents, and attorneys who have been accredited by VA to assist you.
- **Do not sign a blank form** for someone else to complete later. Always review the completed form before signing and keep a copy for yourself.
- **Do not be fooled by companies who advertise they have special relationships** with medical professionals and can guarantee your benefits award. If they are defrauding the Federal government, you could be held responsible for paying those benefits back.
- **Do not provide identifying information** like your social security number, medical records, or other personally identifiable information to anyone offering claims assistance before confirming their credentials using the Office of General Counsel Accreditation tool.

REPORTING

For healthcare-related fraud, please contact VA Healthcare Fraud, VHA Office of Integrity and Compliance Helpline 1-866-842-4357 (VHA-HELP) or VA Benefits Fraud 1-800-827-1000.

For all non-VA fraud report to Federal Trade Commission.

<http://reportfraud.ftc.gov>