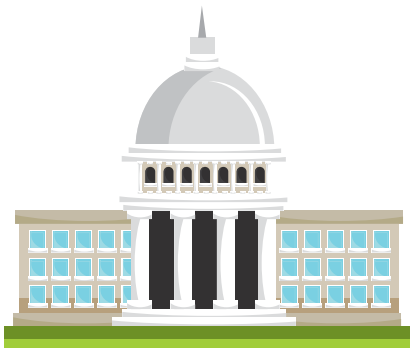


# BE VIGILANT OF SCAMS



The Federal Trade Commission estimated that in 2023 alone, Veterans, Service Members, and their families reported **\$477M in losses to fraud, as per March 31, 2024 data**. This number only represents the fraud that has been detected and has **increased from \$413M in 2022**. This is just what has

been reported. Keeping yourself safe from scams is critical when applying for benefits and services, when accessing them, or authorizing others to do so.

Visit VSAFE online: [www.VSAFE.gov](http://www.VSAFE.gov)



**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. <https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/> is an official source to use to verify.



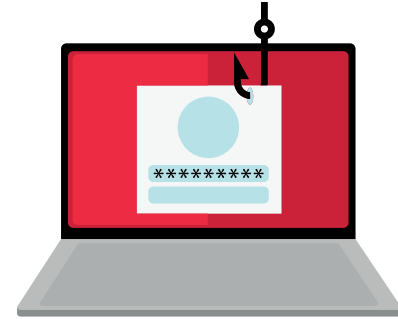
**Be aware of medical professionals who charge a fee** or guarantee a specific benefits-related outcome. If an exam is warranted, VA will order one for you at no cost to you.

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 1-833-38V-SAFE 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 you a specific claim outcome. 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 suspected fraud or scams:**

- Call the VSAFE Fraud Hotline: 1-833-38V-SAFE
- Visit VSAFE online: [www.VSAFE.gov](http://www.VSAFE.gov)