



Scams That Target Veterans

Benefit schemes: There are dishonest advisors who promise veterans that they can get additional VA benefits if they invest in certain products, or offer cash now if the veteran turns over future benefits. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) states that some financial planners and insurance agents try to persuade veterans to buy insurance products or transfer assets to trust so the veteran will qualify for VA Aid and Attendance (A&A) benefits. These so-called “veterans’ advocates” advertise that they can help vets qualify for A&A; many make presentations at senior centers or assisted living facilities.

Veterans who take the pitch are likely to end up without the promised extra pension benefits, disqualified from other government benefits, and stuck in an investment product that’s not in the veteran’s long term best interests. Read the FTC alert at www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0349-veterans-pensions.

What to do: Check out the credentials of anyone offering investment advice or file a complaint via your state securities or insurance regulatory office at www.nasaa.org or www.naic.org. Also file a complaint with your state attorney general and the FTC.

Charity scams: Con artists trade on Americans’ patriotism to pull off their tricks. Just because the word “veterans” is in the name of a bogus charity doesn’t mean veterans or their families will get any benefit.

What to do: Check out the charity on www.give.org or www.charitynavigator.org before giving any money. Make donations directly to the veterans’ organizations you know.

Imposter scams: Another trick is pretending to be from the Department of Veterans Affairs with emails or phone calls requesting personal or financial information that should already be on file. The VA, like IRS and Medicare, uses the U.S. mail for official correspondence.

What to do: Hang up and check with the VA directly.



Help with benefits: Watch out for those who seek to charge for services like filing for pensions or other claims, or getting military records. Know that advisors who are accredited to help veterans are not allowed to charge for their services.

What to do: Get help for free from VA or service organizations. Go to <https://vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html> for military records like the DD-214 separation papers.

In addition:

The AARP Fraud Watch Network www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork is a go-to resource for:

- The latest, breaking scam alerts, delivered right to your inbox;
- A scam-tracking map featuring warnings from law enforcement and people in your state who are sharing their experiences so you'll know what to watch out for;
- The ***Con Artists Playbook***—a handbook of interviews with con artists who reveal how they steal your hard-earned money;
- A phone number you can call to talk to trained volunteers; and
- The ***Watchdog Alert Handbook: 13 Ways Con Artists Can Steal Your Money***

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