

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 4, 2021

## **VA fights back against predatory claims-assistance practices**

**WASHINGTON** — During [National Consumer Protection Week](#), Feb. 28-March 6, the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) is raising public awareness about a tool to protect Veterans and claimants from companies who may be targeting them or their potential benefits.

VA encourages Veterans and their families filing benefits claims to review the department's [Accreditation Search Index](#).

The index provides state-by-state contact information, as well as a downloadable list of Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representatives, attorneys and claims agents who are ready to assist with preparing VA claims in an ethical and lawful manner.

“VA cautions Veterans and claimants of online offers to assist in the preparation of their benefit claims that sound too good to be true,” said Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. “To help guard against fraud and scams, VA urges all Veterans and claimants to first consult VA's Accreditation Search Index to protect themselves from predatory practices.”

A business or individual who prepares, presents or prosecutes VA benefit claims without proper recognition by the department is doing so contrary to law. All accredited representatives have been formally vetted to ensure they have good character and reputation along with being capable of providing competent representation for presenting to VA. When assisting Veterans, they must adhere to VA's standards of professional conduct which expressly prohibit the charging of unlawful or unreasonable fees. Those found in violation risk having their VA accreditation suspended or cancelled.

For more information on VA accredited representatives and their role, visit [Accreditation & Discipline - Office of General Counsel](#) to find information on VA-recognized VSOs and VA-accredited VSO representatives, attorneys and claims agents, fees for services and guidance on how to appoint and how to remove or change representation.

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