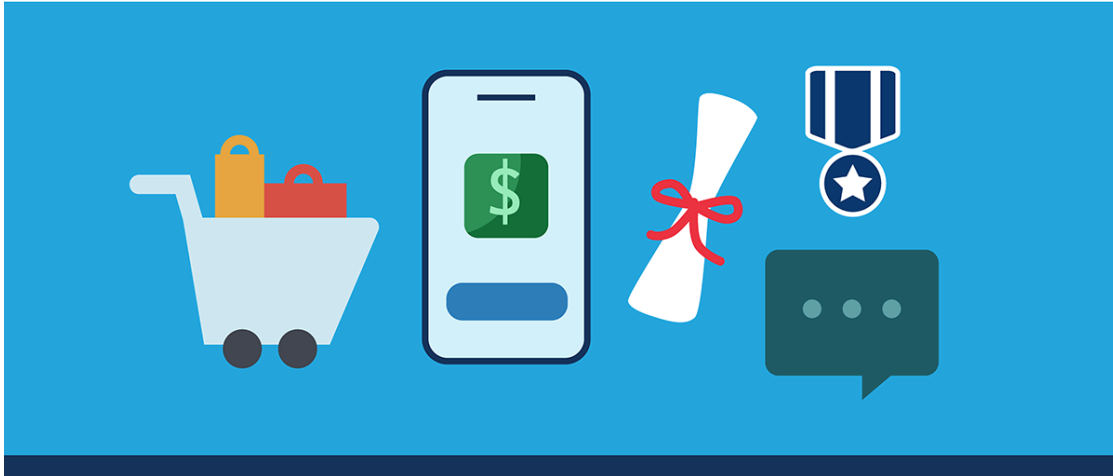


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## MILITARYCONSUMER.gov



### Scam Alert: The National Veterans Golden Age Games are free, no matter what scammers say

BY MilitaryConsumer.gov

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hosts free events like the [National Veterans Golden Age Games](#) to encourage older adults in the veteran community to get active for better health and wellness. But veterans are reporting finding websites or pages on social media that charge a fee to register for the games. These are fakes. Whether you're looking to compete or just want to watch the games, here's how to cross the finish line without running into a scam.

If you're planning to compete in the [Golden Age Games](#), know that the VA is the only official host. This means you can only [register through VA.gov using your ID.me account](#). And it's completely free for you, your caregiver, your coach, and your loved ones to register to compete or watch the games. Registration doesn't open until January 28, 2026, so anything that says you can "register now" is a sure sign of a scam.

#### To help you avoid VA imposter scams:

**Only register through VA.gov.** That's the same website you use for all of your veterans' benefits. And make sure your ID.me account is [up to date](#) so the VA can confirm it's really you registering.

**Never pay for a VA event.** If someone says you have to pay to register or to watch a VA-hosted event, that's a scam. Walk away.

**Never share your VA credentials.** Scammers can use that information to steal your identity or your benefits.

**If you have any questions about the games, email [GoldenAgeGames@Va.Gov](mailto:GoldenAgeGames@Va.Gov).**

## Fraud Prevention Alert for Veterans

Scammers are impersonating the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) using fake letters, emails, and text messages to steal personal information or money. Veterans and their families are encouraged to stay alert and learn how to spot common scam tactics, protect VA benefits, and report suspected fraud.

Find resources about fraud targeting you at [VSafe.gov](https://www.vsafe.gov)

# Fraud Prevention Alert



## Beware: Scammers are impersonating the Department of Veteran Affairs!



### NEED ASSISTANCE?



Accredited attorneys, agents, and Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) are available help you file claims. Click on the link to find [accredited representatives](#) to support you.

Use the VA Office of General Counsel (OGC) [Accreditation Search Tool](#) to confirm and validate the credentials of companies and law firms.

### PROTECTING YOURSELF AND YOUR BENEFITS

Scammers are targeting Veterans and their families by creating fraudulent letters, emails, and texts often including fake VA letterheads and logos, making it difficult to distinguish genuine VA communications from scams.

- ✓ **Fake VA Letterheads and Logos:** Scammers often fake VA letterheads, logos, and phone numbers to seem authentic. VA letters include appeal rights.
- ✓ **Claims of Overpayment:** Scammers claim you have been overpaid on your VA benefits and now owe money back to VA.
- ✓ **Pressure tactics:** Scammers may pressure you into making immediate payments directly to them, instead of through official VA payment channels.
- ✓ **Requests for Sensitive Information:** Scammers may ask for sensitive information, such as your VA credentials, passwords, or financial information.
- ✓ **Verify overpayments:** Verify the authenticity of debt notifications by logging into your official [VA.gov](https://va.gov) [account](#). For more information visit [va.gov/manage-va-debt](https://va.gov/manage-va-debt).
- ✓ **Be cautious of unsolicited contact:** Be wary of unsolicited emails or texts, demanding personal details or directing you to external websites that are not part of [VA.gov](https://va.gov).
- ✓ **Do not pay upfront fees:** If someone demands an upfront payment to help with your VA debt or claims, it's a scam. VA provides free help with managing debts and claims.
- ✓ **Never Share login information:** VA will never ask for your VA login credentials or password.

### RESOURCES AND TOOLS



Veterans who suspect they have experienced fraud can find out more and report to the appropriate agency at [VSAFE.gov](https://www.vsafe.gov) or calling 833-38V-SAFE.



File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at [ReportFraud.FTC.gov](https://www.ftc.gov) or your state attorney.



If you gave your personal information to a scammer, go to [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov) for steps you can take to protect your identity.



If you are unsure about a phone call, letter, email, or text, contact VA directly at 1-800-827-1000.



## BBB® Scam Alert: How to spot an out-of-stock scam before losing money

BY Better Business Bureau

With the holiday shopping season nearing its close and buyers wanting to get gifts delivered on time, there's a crafty online shopping con being reported to BBB Scam Tracker. Scammers claim a product you purchased is out of stock, but they never process your promised refund.

You see a product online that you want to purchase. You click on the link to the company's website, find the product, and check out. Shortly after your card is charged, you receive an email saying the product is out of stock and they will refund your money. You wait several days for the refund to post to your account, but it never does. Then, when you try to contact the online shop, no one responds.

[READ MORE](#)



## BBB Tip: Is that holiday app safe? Better check it twice

BY Better Business Bureau

For Christmas, kids can engage in live video chats with Santa, witness a reindeer feeding, or monitor Santa's sleigh. For Hannukah, kids can illuminate a virtual menorah and play a dreidel game. For Kwanzaa, there are games to learn the principles, light a kinara and count down the days until the holiday. It's evident that apps will continue to play a significant role during the holiday season.

However, before permitting your child to download any app, it's essential to understand the data it may collect and establish appropriate permission settings. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) gives parents control over who collects information from their children online. COPPA applies to all mobile apps and websites (or portions thereof) directed to kids.

[READ MORE](#)

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## This holiday season: Do your part. Shop smart.

Brought to you by BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust and Walmart®

The holiday shopping rush is here—and scammers are ready for it. That's why the BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust, in partnership with Walmart®, is sharing smart, simple ways to shop safely online. BBB research shows that just knowing how scams work can dramatically reduce your chances of falling for one.

Want to protect your wallet and personal info this season? [Check out the link to see 6 essential online holiday shopping tips!](#)



## Your voice matters: Help protect the military community from scams

Our resources are here to help you stay protected from scams and fraud:

✔ **BBB Scam Tracker** – Report scams targeting military consumers and help protect others in the community. Search our database to see if a similar scam has been reported.

✔ **Scam Prevention Guide** – Stay mission-ready with tips to spot and avoid scams before they happen.

✔ **Scam Survival Toolkit** – If you've been targeted, this toolkit walks you through the steps to take and how to stay informed, with tailored resources for our military community.

**BBB Scam Tracker**

**BBB Scam Prevention Guide**

**BBB Scam Survival Toolkit**

## BBB Institute's Military & Veterans Initiative

We help military service members, veterans and their families protect their assets, plan for the future, and prosper in a trusted marketplace.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE](#)

[FIND RESOURCES FROM THE BBB](#)

BBB Institute is proud to present this program in partnership with PayPal and the Association of Military Banks of America

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