**Avoiding Job Scams**

**Image:** Included in toolkit.

### Alt Text: Two Veterans Affairs staff members engaging in conversation at the workplace.

Veterans bring to the workplace valuable skills, experience, dedication, diverse perspective, and unique abilities. Unfortunately, there are individuals that target the Veteran community and attempt to exploit those seeking new career opportunities.

When you seek employment, be aware and avoid job scams and protect your personal information. Scams can often take several forms, including the following:

**False Job Postings**: Scammers create fake job listings that appear legitimate, often using well-known company names or claiming to offer remote positions that require minimal effort for high pay.

**Phishing Scams:** If a job requires a Veteran to click on a specific link or is **asking for detailed personal and financial information**, this could mean someone is trying to collect sensitive information for malicious use. Phishing scams often look like they come from a trusted and well-known company, so always reach out to an employer directly through their legitimate website, rather than respond to any “phishy”-looking communication.

**Upfront Payment Scams:** Some scams require the Veteran to pay upfront fees for training, certifications, or job placement services that are unnecessary.

**Remote Work Equipment Payment Scams:** While it’s not completely out of the norm to have to obtain your own home office equipment, job seekers do not need to do so before being hired. Many scammers will **ask job seekers to**[send money for equipment](https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2023/01/looking-job-scammers-might-be-looking-you) needed to perform the job and state that they’ll be reimbursed in their first paycheck.

**Overseas Job Offer Scams:** Offers for lucrative jobs overseas with promises of high salaries and benefits may turn out to be fraudulent, leaving Veterans stranded or in dangerous situations.

According to the [Better Business Bureau](https://www.bbb.org/all/scamstudies/jobscams/jobscamsfullstudy), there are an estimated 14 million people exposed to job scams every year, with $2 billion in direct losses annually. The [Federal Trade Commission](https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/ftc_gov/pdf/CSN-Annual-Data-Book-2023.pdf) (FTC) reports that $26.4 million in losses was reported by military consumers in 2023. As these numbers continue to rise, VA’s Privacy Service shares the following best practices for Veterans to use to protect themselves:

* **Use Safe and Reliable Sources:** When searching for a job, Veterans must ensure they start by using a safe and reliable source such as:
  + [VA.gov/jobs/](https://www.va.gov/jobs/) — This is the VA’s official website for information on careers at VA.
  + [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov/) — This is the federal government’s official site with job openings nationwide.
  + [CareerOneStop](https://consumer.ftc.gov/now-leaving?external_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.careeronestop.org%2FJobSearch%2FFindJobs%2Ffind-jobs.aspx&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fconsumer.ftc.gov%2Farticles%2Fjob-scams) — Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, CareerOneStop lists hundreds of thousands of jobs. It also links to employment and training programs in each state.
  + [USA.gov](https://www.usa.gov/local-governments) — Find local government websites, which list any open positions they may have on their websites.
* **Do Your Research**: Verify the legitimacy of any job offer or company through reputable sources, such as the Better Business Bureau or the company's official website. Be sure that you are applying to a place that is a real employer.
* **Protect Your Personal Information**: Never provide sensitive personal information over the phone, email, or online unless the recipient's identity and legitimacy has been verified. Use encryption, if possible, when sharing this information, and never share your Social Security Number (SSN) through these means. Also, when Veterans are applying for a job, an employer may do a background check. Read [Employer Background Checks and Your Rights](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0157-background-checks) to learn more.
* **Trust Your Gut:** If it feels like a scam, it probably is. There are often telltale signs that indicate a job posting is probably a scam, such as:
  + The job posting is vague or uses words that are probably too good to be true like quick money, unlimited earning potential, free work-from-home jobs.
  + There is a sense of urgency, or the recruiter is pushing for acceptance to the job immediately without verifying references. Any legitimate company won’t push into accepting a job offer immediately.
  + The job post or email has obvious grammatical or spelling errors.
  + The “company” has an email domain from Gmail or other popular providers.
  + The product the company sells is supposedly endorsed by celebrities or public figures.

If a Veteran sees a job listing or they feel as though they have been targeted by a job scam, it can be reported to the FTC through their website at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov.](https://reportfraud.ftc.gov./) The FTC has compiled resources to help Veterans [spot common job scams](https://consumer.ftc.gov/jobs-and-making-money/jobs). Veterans can also check out the VA Privacy website for additional information about reporting suspected or confirmed [Identity Theft or Fraud](https://department.va.gov/privacy/identity-theft/).