



VA ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY

WHAT VA CLAIMANTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ACCREDITATION PROGRAM'S ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY COMPARED TO OTHER AGENCIES

The goal of our complaint process is to protect veterans and their family members and the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) benefits system from the unethical and unlawful conduct of those who represent VA claimants. The conduct of VA-accredited practitioners must comport to the standards set forth in 38 C.F.R. § 14.632. Congress has authorized VA to investigate and suspend or remove the VA accreditation of any individual who violates the standards of conduct for VA-accredited practitioners.

What the VA Accreditation Program Can Do

The primary purpose of the complaint system for VA-accredited practitioners is to protect veterans. It is our function and our duty to enforce VA's standards of conduct, which are the standards for VA-accredited practitioners in the performance of their work as well as in other activities bearing upon their character. If we determine that a VA-accredited practitioner has violated VA's standards of conduct, we may take action that will result in the practitioner being privately reminded of VA's standards. If the violation of the standards of conduct is serious, the practitioner's VA accreditation may be temporarily or even permanently taken from him or her. However, that action may not solve your own personal problem, as you will learn when you read the next section.

What the VA Accreditation Program Cannot Do

The complaint process is set up to determine if a VA-accredited practitioner has violated the standards of conduct. It is not a substitute for a civil claim against the VA-accredited practitioner. We cannot give you legal advice and cannot modify or change the decision on your VA benefit claim. We generally cannot take money or property from the accredited practitioner to return to you. We cannot sue a VA-accredited practitioner because of his or her careless handling of your claim. We cannot do the work the VA-accredited practitioner failed to do for you. The only action we can take is to impose disciplinary sanctions against the VA-accredited practitioner. By bringing a complaint to us, you help us learn of VA-accredited practitioners who need to correct their behavior or be suspended/cancelled from the practice of VA law. This helps us keep the VA legal profession honorable and competent. In that way, you help yourself, your government and your fellow veterans.

Where Else To File Your Complaint

- If you think someone is trying to sell you a bill of goods by "poaching" your VA pension, you may file a complaint with your [State Attorney General](#) or the [Federal Trade Commission](#).
- If you want to report a problem with the sale of an annuity or other insurance product, you may file a complaint with your [State Insurance Regulator](#).
- If you think a lawyer has behaved unethically or a non-lawyer is engaging in the unauthorized practice of law, you may file a complaint with your [State Bar Association](#) or your [State Attorney General](#).
- If you think that an individual has committed a crime against the programs and operations of VA, you may file a complaint with [VA's Office of Inspector General](#).

For More Information: Visit the VA Office of General Counsel website at:
<http://www.va.gov/ogc/accreditation.asp>