

Nov 9, 2023

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone (850) 245-0150



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General Moody Recovers Nearly \$3.5 Million for Military Members and Their Families



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Ahead of Veterans Day, Attorney General Ashley Moody is highlighting the millions of dollars in recoveries by the Military and Veterans Assistance Program. Since 2019, MVAP received and provided assistance with more than 2,300 complaints, recovering nearly \$3.5 million for Florida's military members, veterans and families. The program's dedicated attorneys, investigators and other team members help veterans, service members and their loved ones affected by scams and deceptive business practices.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Florida takes pride in being a military-friendly state, and we must ensure our service members and their families do not fall prey to scams. Our Military and Veterans Assistance Program has recovered nearly \$3.5 million for affected military members and families. We will continue working hard to assist everyone who has sacrificed so much for our country from fraud and deceptive business practices."

Throughout the last five years, Attorney General Moody's MVAP team has worked daily to assist our service members and veterans, including:

- **Roofing Refund:** The MVAP team helped a Florida veteran, suffering from PTSD, obtain a refund after sustaining substantial damage to his home during Hurricane Ian. A roofing

company took the veteran's money and never fixed the damage to the roof. Attorney General Moody's MVAP team intervened, getting the victim released from the contract and recovering nearly \$19,000 in financial relief, along with a new roof for the veteran.

- **Harris Jewelry**: Harris Jewelry allegedly trained employees to incorrectly tell service members that buying on credit from the company improved credit scores—regardless of credit history or later payment record. The company also failed to comply with consumer financing laws and added unauthorized charges to the amount financed. As part of the settlement in this case, Attorney General Moody recovered and redirected \$50,000 toward educational materials for veterans regarding financial-related scams.
- **Healing Heroes Network**: The organization was accused of falsely promising to use donations to help wounded veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan receive medical treatments. An investigation found that very little of the charitable contributions actually went to further the charitable mission. Most of the money Healing Heroes Network raised allegedly went to professional fundraisers, advertising and salaries. Attorney General Moody, with 10 other state attorneys general, secured \$95,000 to go to a veterans' charity that provides services similar to those Healing Heroes Network represented it would provide. The defendants also agreed to a five-year ban from overseeing, managing or soliciting charitable contributions for any nonprofit organization.
- **American Veterans Foundation, Inc.**: This organization took in millions of dollars in donations by falsely promising that contributions would assist active military members and homeless veterans. Less than 3% of all gathered funds went to helping homeless veterans. Most money went toward fundraising, employee compensation and other overhead with very little money being spent on programs described to donors. Attorney General Moody, with the Federal Trade Commission, secured approximately \$119,000 in funds which were sent to a charitable organization that supports veterans. A portion of those funds were spent to build a specially adapted smart home in Jupiter for a veteran injured in the line of duty.
- **Caring Avenues, LLC and Five Dragon Princesses Holdings, LLC, d/b/a Right at Home**: As a result of these investigations and settlement agreements, all respondents are required to comply with Department of Veterans' Affairs requirements concerning the preparation of and compensation for services related to VA benefits applications. Additionally, \$5,000 was recovered for affected consumers and \$11,804.18 in consumer debts were forgiven.
- **Help the Vets, Inc.**: This organization solicited donations to fund grants, medical care and a suicide prevention program for veterans, but instead used a large portion of donations collected to pay professional fundraisers and compensate the founding director. As a result of this action, approximately \$1.25 million in donations were recovered since January 2019 and redirected to charitable purposes that directly benefited veterans.

Scams or deceptive business practices targeting Florida service members or veterans can be reported at [MyFloridaLegal.com](https://www.myfloridalegal.com), or by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM.

For more information about MVAP, click [here](#).

###