

Chapter 19.335 RCW
VETERANS' BENEFIT-RELATED SERVICES

Sections

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RCW 19.335.005 Findings—Intent. The legislature finds and declares that the practice of persons using the allure of untapped benefits from the United States department of veterans affairs to market products and services substantially affects the public interest. This practice may impact the ability of veterans or their surviving spouses to appropriately plan their finances or care. The legislature further finds that the lack of regulation of persons who provide advice related to veterans' benefits is inadequate to address unfair and deceptive practices that exist in the marketplace and has contributed to the unauthorized practice of law and the use and marketing of financial planning options that are potentially detrimental to the veteran, their spouse, and family. It is the intent of the legislature, through this chapter, to restrict how individuals receive compensation and remuneration for providing assistance with veterans' benefit-related services and to encourage certain disclosures from individuals offering veterans' benefit-related services. [2014 c 67 § 1.]

RCW 19.335.010 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Compensation" means money, property, or anything else of value, which includes, but is not limited to, exclusive arrangements or agreements for the provision of services or the purchase of products.

(2) "Person" includes, where applicable, natural persons, corporations, trusts, unincorporated associations, and partnerships.

(3) "Trade or commerce" includes the marketing or sale of assets, goods, or services, or any commerce directly or indirectly affecting the people of the state of Washington.

(4) "Veterans' benefit matter" means any preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim affecting a person who has filed or has expressed an intention to file an application for determination of payment, service, commodity, function, or status, entitlement to which is determined under laws administered by the United States department of veterans affairs or the Washington state department of veterans affairs pertaining to veterans, dependents, and survivors. [2014 c 67 § 2.]

RCW 19.335.020 Prohibited acts or practices. A person may not engage in the following acts or practices:

(1) Receiving compensation for advising or assisting another person with a veterans' benefit matter, except as permitted under Title 38 of the United States Code;

(2) Using financial or other personal information gathered in order to prepare documents for, or otherwise represent the interests of, another in a veterans' benefit matter for purposes of trade or commerce;

(3) Receiving compensation for referring another person to a person accredited by the United States department of veterans affairs;

(4) Representing, either directly or by implication, either orally or in writing, that the receipt of a certain level of veterans' benefits is guaranteed. [2014 c 67 § 3.]

RCW 19.335.030 Advertising or promotion disclosures. (1) It is unlawful for any person to advertise or promote any event, presentation, seminar, workshop, or other public gathering regarding veterans' benefits or entitlements that does not include the following disclosure: "This event is not sponsored by, or affiliated with, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, or any other congressionally chartered or recognized organization of honorably discharged members of the Armed Forces of the United States or any of their auxiliaries. Products or services that may be discussed at this event are not necessarily endorsed by those organizations. You may qualify for benefits other than or in addition to the benefits discussed at this event."

(2) The disclosure required by subsection (1) of this section must be in the same type size and font as the term "veteran" or any variation of that term as used in the event advertisement or promotional materials.

(3) The disclosure required by subsection (1) of this section must be disseminated, both orally and in writing, at the beginning of any event, presentation, seminar, workshop, or other public gathering regarding veterans' benefits or entitlements.

(4) The disclosure required by subsection (1) of this section does not apply where the United States department of veterans affairs, the Washington state department of veterans affairs, or any other congressionally chartered or recognized organization of honorably discharged members of the armed forces of the United States or any of their auxiliaries have granted written permission to the advertiser or promoter for the use of its name, symbol, or insignia to advertise or promote such events, presentations, seminars, workshops, or other public gatherings. The disclosure required by subsection (1) of this section also does not apply where the event, presentation, seminar, workshop, or gathering is part of an accredited continuing legal education course. [2014 c 67 § 4.]

RCW 19.335.040 Application of chapter. Nothing in this chapter applies to officers, employees, or volunteers of the state, of any county, city, or other political subdivision, or of a federal agency of the United States, who are acting in their official capacity. [2014 c 67 § 5.]

RCW 19.335.050 Application of consumer protection act. The legislature finds that the practices covered by this chapter are matters vitally affecting the public interest for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. A violation of this chapter is not reasonable in relation to the development and preservation of business and is an unfair or deceptive act in trade or commerce and an unfair method of competition for purposes of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. [2014 c 67 § 6.]

RCW 19.335.900 Short title. This chapter may be known and cited as the "pension poacher prevention act." [2014 c 67 § 8.]