



Identity Protection

Identity theft is a serious crime. Help your service members protect their identity by building awareness and know what to do if they suspect fraud.

Identity theft happens when someone steals personal information like names and Social Security numbers to commit fraud. Service members are disproportionately affected by these crimes, which can create long-term financial challenges such as damaged credit and tax debt.

The transitory nature of military life causes service members and their families to be more vulnerable to this type of fraud. According to the Federal Trade Commission, active-duty service members are 76% more likely to report experiencing identity theft than other adults.

Identity theft that goes unnoticed can have serious consequences including limiting service members' financing options for major purchases, military security clearances and post-transition employment opportunities. Any suspected fraud should be reported to the FTC.

Helping your service members understand how to protect their identity can save them months or even years of stress. Recognizing red flags like unauthorized transactions, changes to their credit report and unfamiliar financial statements can stop a problem before it causes significant damage.

Personal financial managers and counselors can help continue the conversation. Share this local contact information:

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How to Start the Conversation:

- “What type of information do you think is OK to share online?”
- “When is the last time you checked your bank account or credit report for unfamiliar transactions or suspicious activity?”
- “I use alerts to monitor my accounts. Would you like me to show you how to set them up?”
- “Do you know you can request an Identity Protection Pin from the IRS to guard against fraudulent tax returns being filed?”
- “Have you installed antivirus and antispyware software on your devices?”
- “Did you know you can request a free credit freeze any time?”
- “Did you know service members can access free electronic credit monitoring?”

Resources:

- The Office of Financial Readiness: <https://finred.usalearning.gov>
- Encourage service members to check their credit report at least once per year: [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com)
- Learn how to place credit freezes and fraud alerts: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-know-about-credit-freezes-and-fraud-alerts>
- Report identity theft and get a recovery plan: [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov)
- Find a personal financial manager: <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil>
- Find a personal financial counselor: <https://finred.usalearning.gov/pfcMap>