

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Wizards: “How to Apply” and “Can I file a claim online?”

Discovery Readout

Background + Problem Statement

Background

Some of our applications require the Veteran to answer a series of questions before beginning their application. Depending on their prerequisite answers:

The Veteran is shown only certain (but not all) parts of an online application (e.g., the 526ez online app)

OR

The Veteran is sent/routed to a specific application (e.g., 1 of 7 possible education benefit application)

Background

We want to move/consolidate these pre-requisite Wizard steps with the application tool landing page in order to:

- 1/ Make the Veteran experience of starting their online application more seamless. (Today, they have to find the Wizard on a content page, and from there, fill out the wizard and then go to or are sent to the tool landing page.)
- 2/ Make apply online CTAs from tier 2 content and other content outside of the benefit hubs more clear and direct. Example: from our mvp form detail landing pages or from the modernized mvp form search results.

Problem Statement

We can't send users directly to online applications/tools to complete education benefit and disability claim forms because our critical pre-requisite wizards exist only content heavy pages.

These wizards are sometimes so far down these pages, some users scroll right past them.

Discovery Goals

At this stage, I sought to understand

- Are there other URLs not defined in our epic that have similar wizards we need to include in our work?
- How did the wizards come to live on the content page rather than on the tool pages?
- What other options have been explored other than putting wizards directly on the content pages?

Discovery Findings

Key Findings

1. Wizards exist on 4 URLs that we should address through this work; 2 others to consider
2. Wizards are on content pages because that's where the users were landing
3. An option to allow users to bypass the wizard was also explored

Findings

1. Wizards exist on 4 URLs that we should address through this work; 2 others to consider

- 4 URLs
 - <https://va.gov/education/eligibility>
 - <https://va.gov/education/how-to-apply>
 - <https://va.gov/disability/eligibility>
 - <https://va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim>
- Disability wizard has 4 possible outcomes (eBenefits, 2 content pages, 1 form)
- Education wizard has 7 possible outcomes (all point to different forms)
- 2 more to consider: Higher Level Review and [Discharge Upgrade](#)

Findings

2. Wizards are on content pages because that's where the users were landing

- There was a very high rate of users completing the wrong forms, and these content pages were where users were landing when looking for forms relevant to their task
- This was a compromise, because it was difficult to control how people got to the site, and there wasn't a way to tell if someone had already filled out the wizard

Findings

3. An option to allow users to bypass the wizard was also explored

- The team had a "turbo tax" approach at one point (asking user if they want to be walked through or if the user wanted to go directly to the form)
- This driven by stakeholder request because they didn't want to have to keep going through the wizard
- Ultimately it was decided the wizard wasn't that hard to go through (although it has since grown)

Additional Insights

- It is very difficult to find relevant research studies in our research history document. After dedicating a full day to combing through the existing research, I have decided to rely on conversations w/ the IA and UX resources available.
- We need to consider that content pages exist that are specific to a form and link directly to the form itself, e.g. [the Fry Scholarship content page](#).
- Veterans receive mailers with urls sending them directly to the online form (bypassing the wizard).

Outcomes

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- We have a complete list of the pages in question
- No research was found to guide one way or another toward one solution
 - Leaning toward the "Turbo tax" approach - will discuss with team
- Mapped wizard outcomes for disability and education, URLs users are sent to, and possible flows for our solution.