



# VA-Mobile Feature Support Demo/Review

Sprint 16

May 5, 2025

The recording of the demo can be accessed [here](#).

# VA-MFS Team



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## OCTO Mission:

Our mission is to improve Veterans' lives with better software.

2025 OCTO Objectives	Key Results
O1: VA's digital experiences are the easiest and most efficient way to access VA health care and benefits.	1.1 Improve satisfaction with our web and mobile products by 5 points. 1.2 We have reduced the total time Veterans spend waiting for a response from our digital experiences by 50%, towards a goal of less than 4 seconds per transaction. 1.3 100% of transactions received via our digital experiences are either processed correctly or we have notified the user of an error.
O2: OCTO's platforms are the fastest, most efficient, and most secure way to deliver products at VA.	2.1 100% of authentications to our systems and tools (both Veteran-facing and internal) occur using a secure credential. 2.2 We have reduced the total error rates in our platforms by 50% compared to Q4 2024, towards a goal less than 1% per endpoint. 2.3 100% of VA employees have access to a valuable Generative AI tool to help with their work. 2.4 Each of our platforms* and tools increase the number of non-OCTO built capabilities or non-OCTO users by 50%. (*excluding mobile)
O3: OCTO teammates are empowered with the knowledge and resources they need to make sustained impact.	3.1 Team members reporting more than a reasonable amount of stress is 5 points lower for each quarter in 2025 than it was in the corresponding quarter in 2024. 3.2 Every OCTO Portfolio identifies 2 or more strategic decisions per quarter that would benefit the larger OCTO team, and documents them publicly in a shared location. 3.3 75% or more team members are confident they have the knowledge needed to make effective decisions.
O4: OCTO positively influences VA's ability to deliver software products and services faster, safer, and with higher quality.	4.1 OCTO has delivered at least 10 impactful artifacts or learning activities (e.g., trainings, guides, COP meetings) focused on improving delivery practices that achieve an NPS score of 30 or higher from the target OIT delivery staff. 4.2 OCTO has helped resolve/support at least 10 significant engineering issues or products outside our portfolio. 4.3 Five or more non-OCTO teams have used SPRUCE to deliver high quality software.

# Sprint 16 Ticket Changes

**Our Vision:** Every Veteran is guaranteed access to self-service benefits and accurate data

**Our Mission:** Continuously deliver high-quality digital experiences for the benefit of all Veterans and their families

## Rollover from Sprint 15

- [350](#) Stakeholder Testing (complete)

## Added to the Sprint Post-Planning

- [417](#) Draft initial research goals + research questions v2 (complete)
- [342](#) GitHub Release Notes - Part 1 (complete)
- [1582](#) Hide Veteran Status Card on Military Information Page (complete)
- [431](#) Investigate the Crashes over the Weekend with VSC (complete)
- [418](#) GitHub Release Notes - Part 2 (complete)

## Removed from the Sprint Post-Planning

- [412](#) Release VSC Redesign to VA Mobile App (The AC for this ticket was covered in 362)

# Sprint 16 Completed Tickets

**Our Vision:** Every Veteran is guaranteed access to self-service benefits and accurate data

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## Product Completed

- [275](#) Set up Ongoing Sync with Web Team Members

## UX Completed

- [245](#) Determine recruitment + screeners
- [403](#) Determine research methodology
- [411](#) Create presentation
- [413](#) Prep for presentation to stakeholders
- [407](#) Web Veteran Status Card UX support

# Sprint 16 Completed Tickets Cont.

**Our Vision:** Every Veteran is guaranteed access to self-service benefits and accurate data

**Our Mission:** Continuously deliver high-quality digital experiences for the benefit of all Veterans and their families

## Engineering Completed

- [402](#) Spike: Debt Service
- [1572](#) [FE] Veteran Status Card - New page
- [1571](#) Veteran Status PDF changes [FE]
- [1579](#) [FE] Veteran Status Card FAQ
- [412](#) Release VSC Redesign to VA Mobile App
- [393](#) Review the prerequisites for requesting a public repository
- [394](#) Certify that all branches, issues, and PR's are free of internally sensitive VA information
- [395](#) Implement GitHub Security and Branch Protection Standards
- [362](#) Pre-Release Veteran Status Redesign Implementation

# Continuation of Work into Sprint 17

**Our Vision:** Every Veteran is guaranteed access to self-service benefits and accurate data

**Our Mission:** Continuously deliver high-quality digital experiences for the benefit of all Veterans and their families

## In Progress

- none!

# Natalie | Product Updates

## Debt Services

- Aligned with FM team to focus efforts on how Veterans can view their benefit overpayments and medical copayments in the mobile app.
  - Developed a Product Brief

## Veteran Status Card

- Discussed how MFS can support the mobile analytics for error messaging and views of Veteran Status Card.
  - Data Dog (BE metrics)
  - Firebase (FE metrics)

## Product Brief: Overpayment and Copayment Debts

### Overview

Veterans can experience debt from the VA. The two types of debt that the Financial Management Team has focused on include:

- Overpayments
- Copayments (also referred to as copays)

Benefit overpayment debt can occur when a Veteran receives more compensation than they are entitled to, and it is handled by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). Examples of overpayments include a dependent change from a divorce, or even when a Veteran receives education benefits for a class but then drops the class and does not report that. In these instances, the Veteran will owe money to the VA for such actions.

Copayments are part of an individual's health insurance and are the amount of money owed for a specific healthcare service or prescription; the remainder of the cost is covered by insurance. Veterans with medical copayment debt from the VA have received care at a VA health facility. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) manages medical copayments.

Veterans can view their overpayment and copayment debts through the authenticated experience on VA.gov. After logging on, they can access their debt portal through the My VA tab. If overpayment or copayment debt exists, Veterans can take the following actions:

- View the debt
- Make a payment and resolve the debt online

# Natasha/Emily | Pre-Need Burial

## Discipline (UX)

### Pre-Need Burial

- Made final adjustments to the [research report](#) and [presentation slides](#)
- Prepped and presented findings to the VA.gov Pre-Need Burial Team
- 🕒 Stay tuned after the demo for the findings



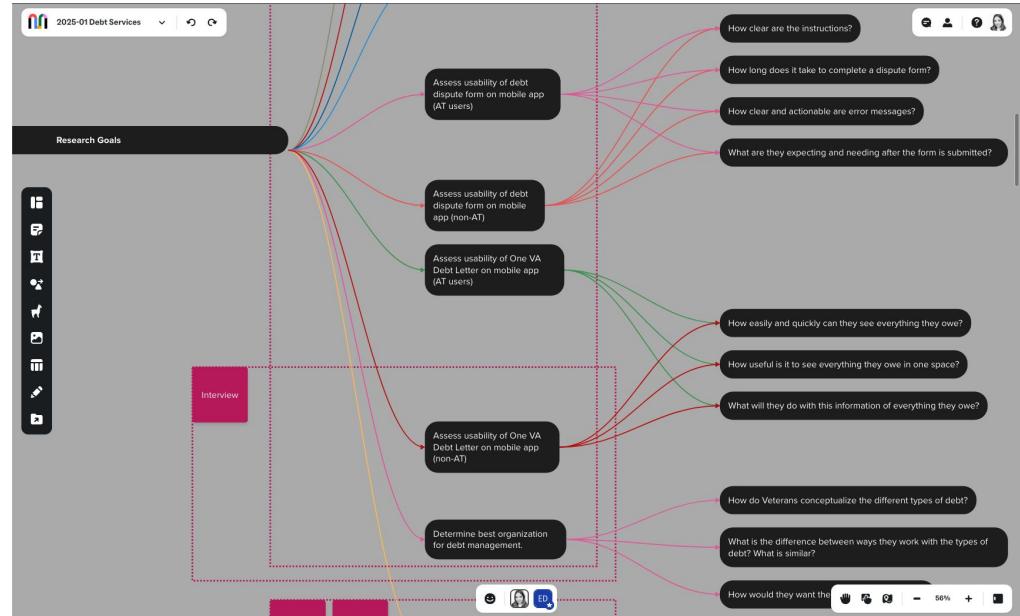
# Natasha/Emily | Debt Services

## Discipline (UX)

### Debt Services

- Met with the Financial Management Team for a demo of the Debt Portal
- Reworked research goals and questions
- Identified appropriate methodologies
  - Usability testing
  - Interview
  - Comparative analysis
  - Card sort

### Mind map in Mural



# Natasha/Emily | Veteran Status Card

## Discipline (UX)

### Veteran Status Card

- How do I get a physical version of my Veteran Status Card?
  - **Added:** You may be unable to print your Veteran Status Card if you are ineligible, if there are issues with your records, or if a system error occurs.
  - Link label updated
  - Print link hidden when an error message is shown instead of the Veteran Status Card

16px

#### How can I use the Veteran Status Card?

You can use the Veteran Status Card to prove your Veteran status to businesses and organizations offering discounts. Acceptance may vary, so check with specific entities in advance.

16px

#### How do I get a physical version of my Veteran Status Card?

You can print a copy of your Veteran Status Card and cut it out to keep in your wallet.

[Print your Veteran Status Card \(PDF\)](#)

Note: The Veteran Status Card is for identification only and does not guarantee benefits. Additional documentation may be required. You may be unable to print your Veteran Status Card if you are ineligible, if there are issues with your records, or if a system error occurs.

16px

#### What other types of Veteran ID are available?

# Kim | Veteran Status Card Redesign (Web)

## Discipline (Engineering)

### Explanation of the work:

- **Preamble:** New Veteran Status Card page and redesign under Profile on VA.gov.
- **Work:** Epic [1067](#): All work is behind a `vetStatusStage1` feature flag.
- **Solution:**
  - Issue [1572](#): Updated the Veteran Status Card PDF to match redesign.
  - Issue [1572](#): Created a dedicated page for the Veteran Status Card under Profile.
  - Issue [1579](#): Implemented an FAQ section below the Veteran Status Card.
  - Issue [1582](#): Removed the Veteran Status Card from the Military Information page.
  - Work will continue in Sprint 17.

### Profile

Personal information

Contact information

Personal health care contacts

Military information

### Veteran Status Card

Direct deposit information

Accredited representative or VSO

Notification settings

Account security

Connected apps

## Veteran Status Card

This card makes it easy to prove your service and access Veteran discounts, all while keeping your personal information secure.

### Veteran Status Card



#### Name

Mitchell G Jenkins

#### Latest period of service

United States Air Force • 2009–2013

#### DoD ID Number

3332224445

#### VA disability rating

40%

This card doesn't entitle you to any VA benefits.

## Frequently asked questions

Expand all +

What if my Veteran Status Card displays incorrect information? +

How can I use the Veteran Status Card? +

How do I get a physical version of my Veteran Status Card? +

What other types of Veteran ID are available? +

# Alex | Public GitHub Repo

## Discipline (Engineering)

### Explanation of the work:

- In an effort to support our github project going public we wanted to ensure that there was no potential PII leaks.
- To make the process more efficient and verifiable we created a script that allowed us to pull our data and utilize the open source tool from Microsoft (Presidio) for scanning for potential PII.
- This could potentially be leveraged by other teams looking to go through the same process we are.



# Michael | Debt Services Spike

## Discipline (Engineering)

### Explanation of the work:

- The website has several features related to overpayment debts and copayments that are not available on the mobile app, including listing out those financials and providing descriptions, links to manage the payments owed, and instructions on how to dispute payments
- Through this spike the differences between the website and app were documented, and paths forward were laid out on how to move forward to provide the same features in the app that are available in the website



# Sprint 17

# Sprint 17 Goals

**Our Vision:** Every Veteran is guaranteed access to self-service benefits and accurate data

**Our Mission:** Continuously deliver high-quality digital experiences for the benefit of all Veterans and their families

- Wrap up development to ease the burden for Veterans on VA.gov by implementing the IIR's industry-standard redesign of the Veteran Status Card.
- To support the web VSC redesign through the collaboration cycle, the team will begin documenting artifacts necessary for staging and review so Veterans have a positive experience when this feature is live.
- To make our pre-need burial research visible, we will present and share our research findings with the VA so that they understand the recommendations that Veterans have on this topic.
- Align with the Financial Management Team on Debt Service research efforts and begin the research plan to understand how Veterans want to view overpayments and copayments on the app.
- Begin designs that will allow Veterans to view the amount owed for benefit overpayments and medical copayments, and see details related to that debt on the app.
- Kick off the collaboration cycle with the initiative that will allow Veterans to view their overpayment and copayment debt information on the mobile app.
- To support the VA's commitment to open source, transparency, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, we will continue the steps to make our GitHub project instance and repository public.

# Sprint 17 Committed Work

**Our Vision:** Every Veteran is guaranteed access to self-service benefits and accurate data

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## Veteran Status Card on Web incl. Collab Cycle

- [443](#): Feedback Button
- [1580](#): Veteran Status Card alert updates
- [1581](#): Veteran Status Card accessibility and mobile checkup
- [1577](#): Link from Profile to Veteran Status Card
- [446](#): Product QA: VSC Redesign (web)
- [447](#): UX QA: VSC Redesign (Web)
- [425](#): E2E Tests (staging and review artifacts)
- [426](#): Unit Test Coverage (staging review artifacts)

## Pre-Need Burial

- [359](#): Pre-need Burial: Research: Share research findings with stakeholders (meeting)

## Debt Services - General and Copayments/Overpayments incl. Collab Cycle

- [416](#): Finalize research goals + questions v2
- [450](#): Divide research into individual studies
- [226](#): User flows and sitemap placement
- [227](#): Low-fi designs
- [449](#): Kick off the Collab Cycle (Product ticket)
- [444](#): SPIKE: Linking Veterans to VA.gov Debt Portal from Mobile app

# Sprint 17 Committed Work

**Our Vision:** Every Veteran is guaranteed access to self-service benefits and accurate data

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## Public GitHub Repo

- [396](#): Obtain COR approval and finalize public repo request

## Other

- [445](#): Thresholds percentage for VSC alerts
- [448](#): Analytics Setup: VSC Error Messaging

# Questions?

# Pre-Need Burial Mobile App Discovery

## Mobile Feature Support | April 2025

Emily DeWan and Natasha Huckleberry



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# Background

## Current state for pre-need eligibility:

- Can apply by phone, fax, or online through VA.gov
- No status updates are given after they apply
- Decision letters are mailed (no digital copies are available)
- **The VA app lacks any features related to pre-need eligibility**

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for the VA. At the top, there is a header with the VA logo, a 'Sign in' button, and a 'Menu' button. Below the header, the title 'Apply for pre-need eligibility determination' is displayed, followed by 'Form 40-10007'. A progress bar indicates '1 of 7 Applicant information'. The main content area asks 'What is the applicant's relationship to the service member or Veteran? (\*Required)'. There are four radio button options: 'Applicant is the service member or Veteran', 'Spouse or surviving spouse', 'Unmarried adult child', and 'Other'. Below this section is a question 'What if the applicant is not a service member or Veteran?'. At the bottom of the screen are 'Back' and 'Continue' buttons, and a 'Need help?' link.



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# Research goals

1. Veteran motivations
2. Learning channels
3. Clarity check
4. Veteran needs

# Outcome goals

1. Proactively surface burial info
2. Improve VA.gov burial content
3. Define mobile app features
4. Pre-need information architecture

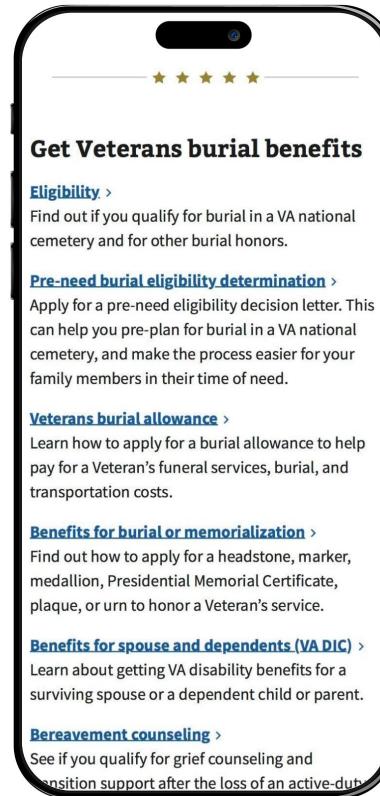


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# Methodology

Moderated remote sessions

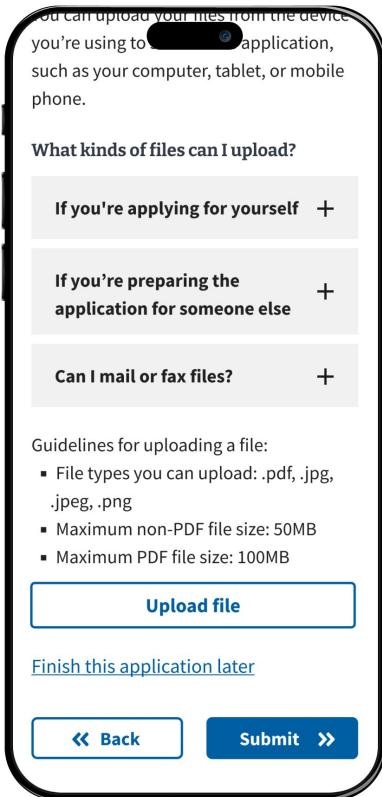
- 13 Veterans who wish to be buried in a VA National Cemetery or are undecided
- All on mobile
- Semi structured, mostly conversational
- Viewed VA.gov burial benefits section
- Simplified prototype
  - Application
  - My VA
  - Mobile app



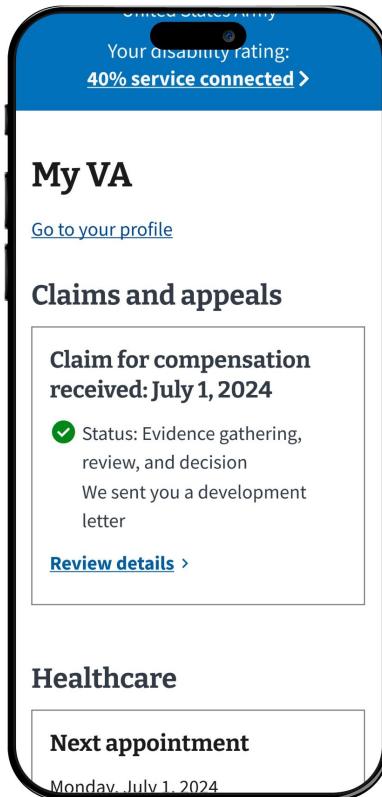
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# Simplified prototype

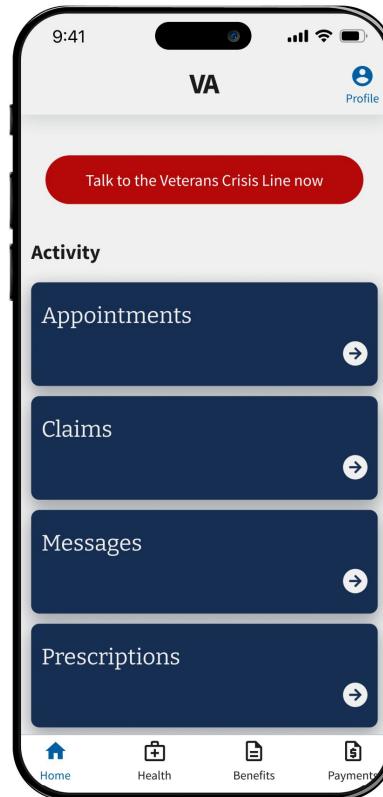
Application



My VA



Mobile App



# Key findings

**Planning ahead for death is seen as a practical way to care for loved ones.**

**Personal experiences of loss are a strong prompt for planning, but urgency is often missing.**

*“I've seen enough people dying, enough families in grief that the more the deceased does before they die, the easier it is for them. When they're in uncharted territory, they start fighting.” – P9*

*“[For their planning] I feel like I'm pretty healthy, and the idea of passing is far from my mind.” – P6*



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# Key findings

**Most participants learn about their benefits through word of mouth rather than VA.gov.**

*“No, they kind of tap dance around that stuff. Mortality and the VA: they really don't want you to think about it, I don't think.” – P7*



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# Key findings

**Awareness of pre-need eligibility is low, and is usually thought of with more comprehensive funeral planning services.**

*"I've got a DD-214 and an honorable discharge, so do I really need to find out if I'm qualified?" – P2*

*"A lot of people see pre-need as being the whole process, because that's what pre-need insurance is. I don't know if people would get confused as to think it's the whole enchilada."*

*– P7*



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# Key findings

**Existing burial content on VA.gov is generally understandable, but there is desire for clearer and simple communication.**

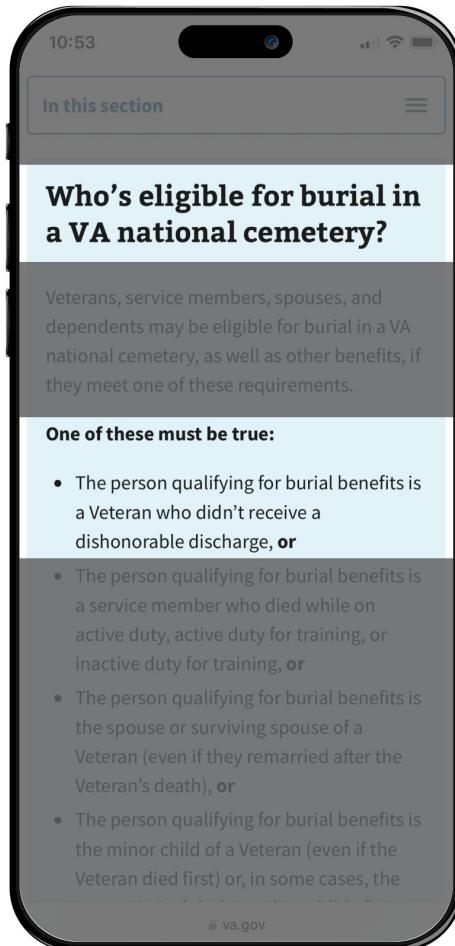
*“Why can't they just say if you received a dishonorable discharge, you're not eligible?... Why can't they just use the same wording [as on DD-214]: Veteran whose character of service was honorable is eligible?” – P2*



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# Key findings

**Existing burial content on VA.gov is generally understandable, but there is desire for clearer and simple communication.**



*"Why can't they just say if you received a dishonorable discharge, you're not eligible?... Why can't they just use the same wording [as on DD-214]: Veteran whose character of service was honorable is eligible?" – P2*



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# Key findings

**Participants prefer phones for quick tasks, but turn to computers or tablets for anything more involved.**

*[reasons for using the phone]  
Quick reference stuff, like if I get some little text saying they sent me a message back. There may be a quick tap in just to see.” – P11*



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# Key findings

**Participants desire transparency from the VA and generally have low expectations for communication.**

*“There's never a time frame given, so when you submit it, an expectation of now to infinity is all we can get.” – P10*

*“I think that's extremely important just to know, just to get it taken care of. I think it's one of the things that can be easily forgotten.” – P5*



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# Key findings

**Everyone wants a digital copy of their pre-needs eligibility letter.**

*“Oh, so I can forward it to my family members right from my phone. If we had text or something, there’d be a quicker way to get it out to other people.” – P15*



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# Key findings

**Participants have a strong desire to ensure their loved ones can access important documents after they die.**

*“If I get a copy [of the decision letter], the first thing I’m going to do is scan it and upload it.” – P10*

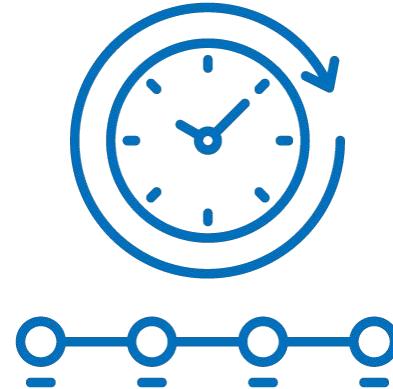
*“If there was a registry, maybe they could punch in and see ‘already qualified.’” – P11*



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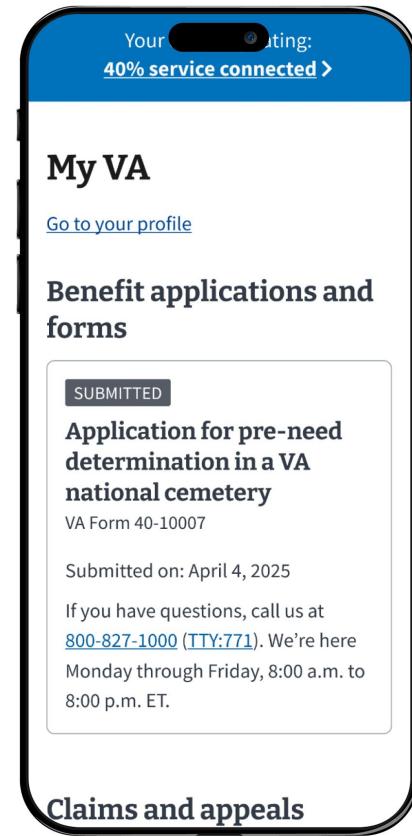
# Recommendation #1

**Provide timeline for the process of pre-need  
eligibility determination**



# Recommendation #2

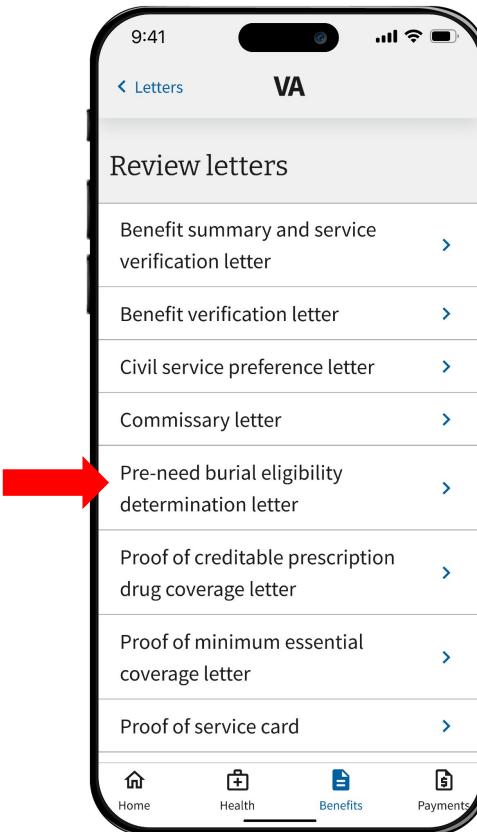
## Add status updates to My VA and the app



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# Recommendation #3

**Add decision letter to MyVA and the app**



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## Recommendation #4

**Provide family members and other designated people of Veterans access to pre-need eligibility decision. (e.g. allow Next of Kin to be added)**



# Recommendations for other teams

## Burial information on VA.gov



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# Recommendations for other teams

## Burial information on VA.gov

1. Strategy for informing Veterans



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# Recommendations for other teams

## Burial information on VA.gov

1. Strategy for informing Veterans
2. Clarity on purpose of pre-need form

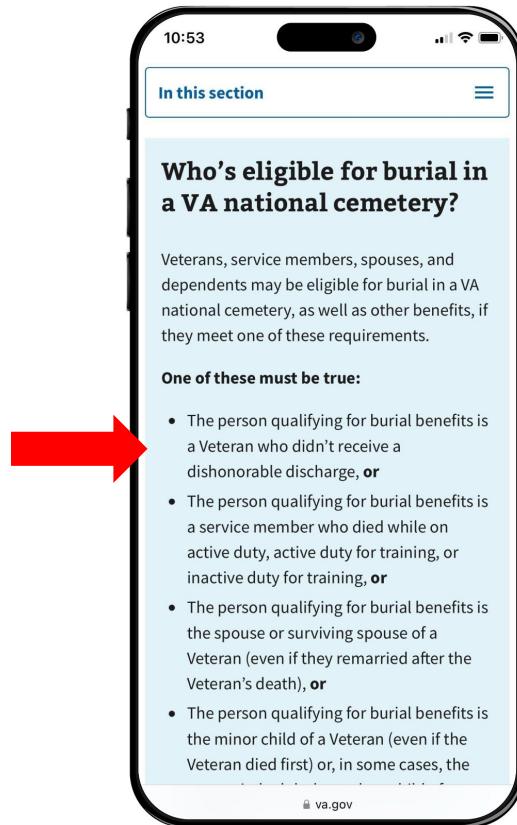


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# Recommendations for other teams

## Burial information on VA.gov

1. Strategy for informing Veterans
2. Clarity on purpose of pre-need form
3. Rework eligibility copy



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# Technical limitations

- Currently can only build submission of eligibility forms
  - Unable to display status updates
  - Unable to provide digital copy of decision letter
- No work is currently being planned on pre-need burial
  - Current data service (EOAS) is being phased out
  - Upcoming system (CaMEO - by Salesforce) will come later this year
- Once CaMEO is in place, the team can re-evaluate



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# Further research needed

**Assistive technology users**



**Younger Veterans and family members**



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# Thank you!

Emily DeWan and Natasha Huckleberry



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