

IDENTITY WORKING GROUP MEETING • DECEMBER 15, 2022

Discovery research with Veterans  
to understand how we drive  
adoption of safer, more secure  
sign-in options

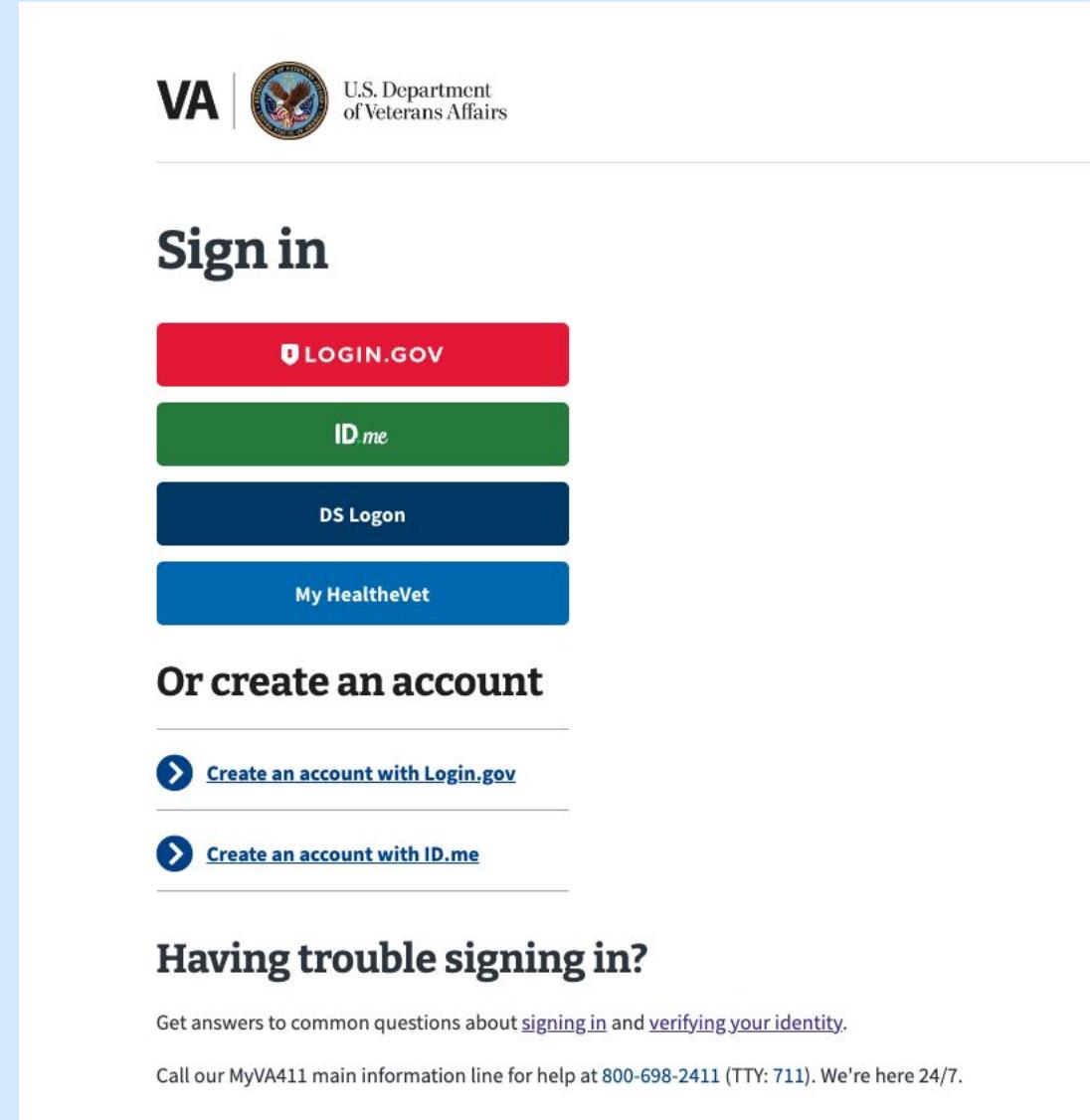


U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



## What we know

Users are **frustrated** and **confused** because they must go to multiple websites to access VA services and there are a variety of ways to sign in via credentials that have known usability, security, and compliance issues.



The image shows the official website of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). At the top right, the VA logo and the text "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs" are displayed. Below this, the word "Sign in" is prominently featured in a large, bold, black font. Underneath "Sign in" are four horizontal buttons: a red button labeled "LOGIN.GOV", a green button labeled "ID.me", a dark blue button labeled "DS Logon", and a light blue button labeled "My HealtheVet". Below these buttons, the text "Or create an account" is displayed in a bold, black font. Two blue circular arrows with white chevrons point to the right, followed by the text "Create an account with Login.gov" and "Create an account with ID.me". At the bottom left, the text "Having trouble signing in?" is shown in a bold, black font. To its right, smaller text reads "Get answers to common questions about [signing in](#) and [verifying your identity](#)". At the very bottom right, the text "Call our MyVA411 main information line for help at 800-698-2411 (TTY: 711). We're here 24/7." is visible.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Sign in

LOGIN.GOV

ID.me

DS Logon

My HealtheVet

Or create an account

>Create an account with Login.gov

>Create an account with ID.me

Having trouble signing in?

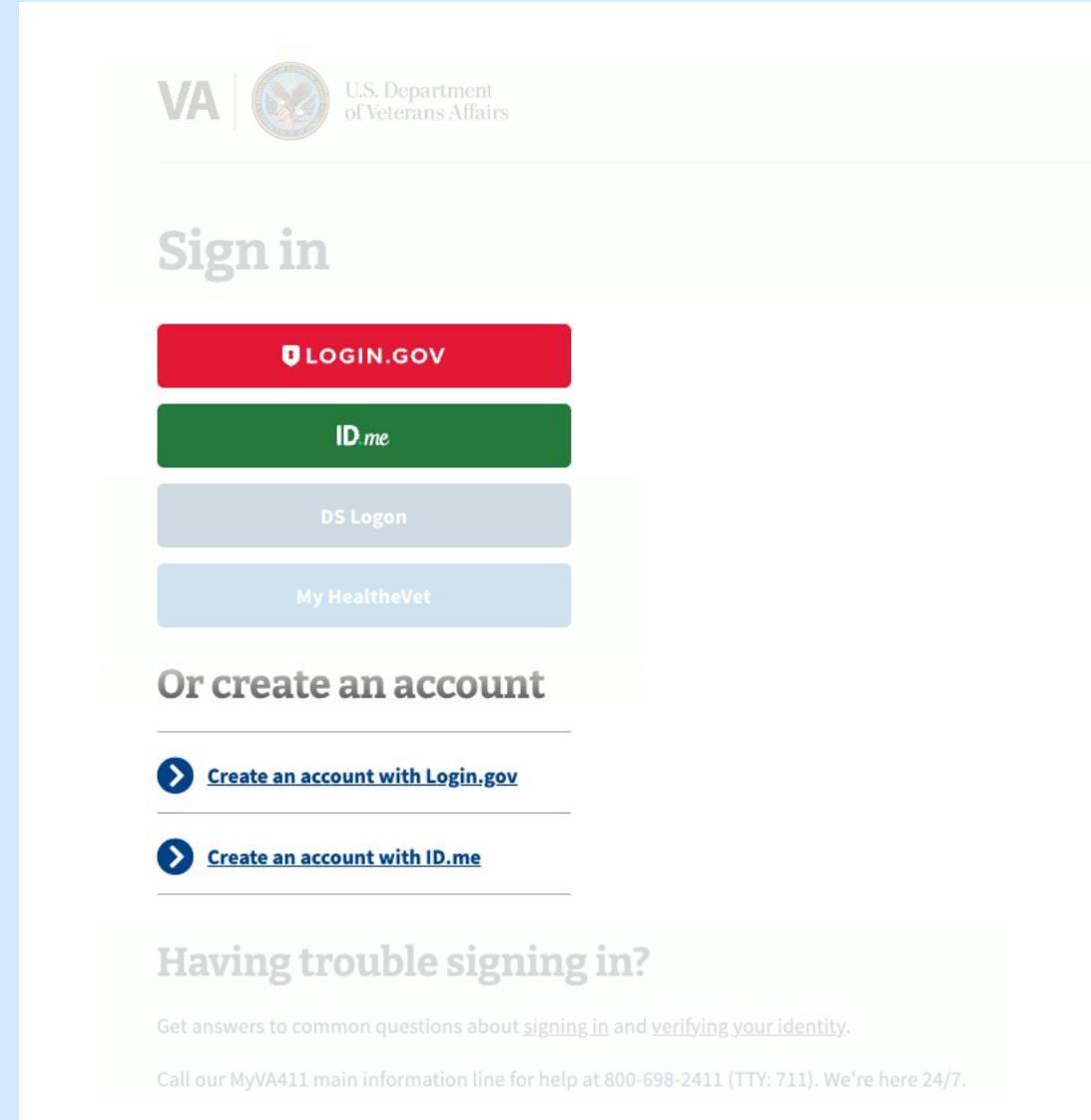
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## The product vision

One sign-on to access all products and services, with a choice between a public or private credential option.

- **Adherence to standards:** Robust, compliant credential solutions (NIST 800-63A)
- **Veteran-centered experience:** Design approach based on Veteran input to discover and validate solutions



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## Sign in

[LOGIN.GOV](#)

[ID.me](#)

[DS Logon](#)

[My HealtheVet](#)

### Or create an account

[Create an account with Login.gov](#)

[Create an account with ID.me](#)

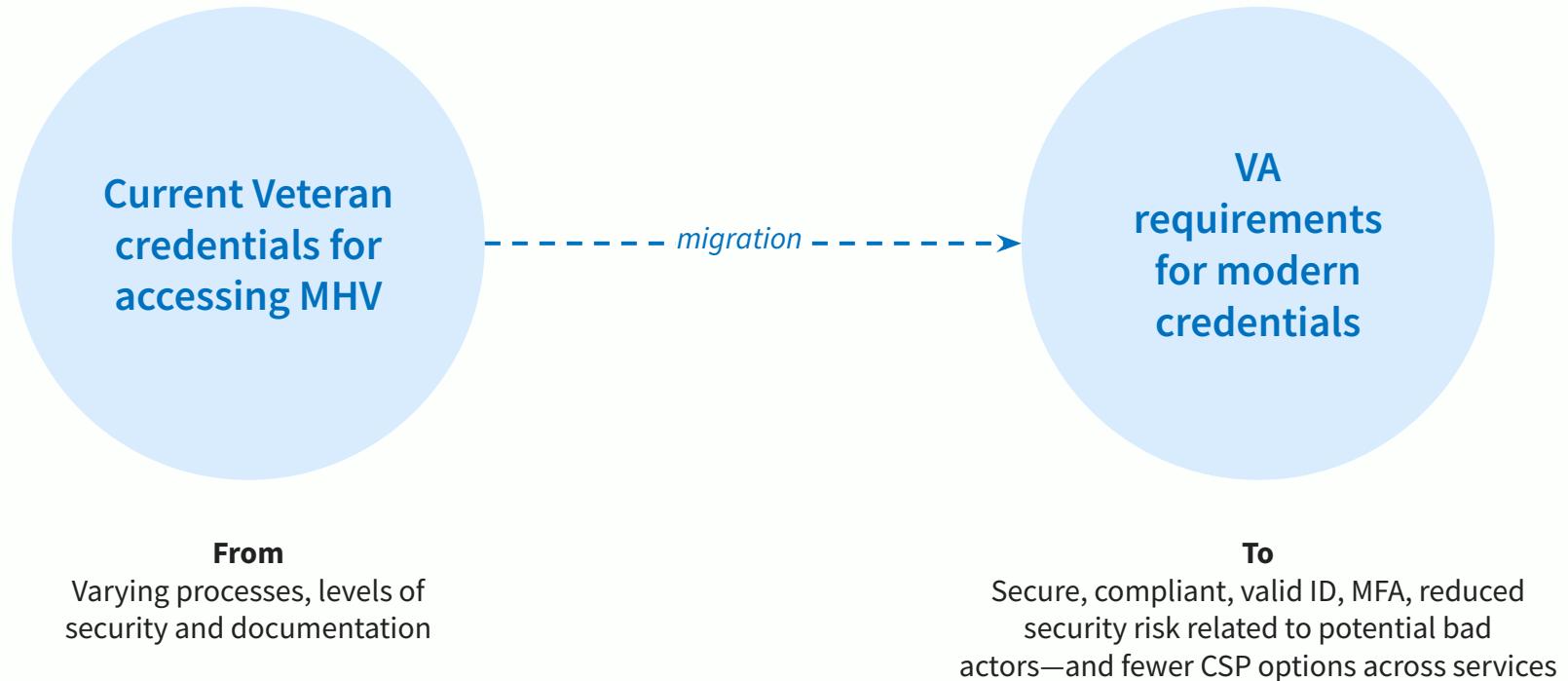
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# Understanding the constraints

To understand possible paths for migration we need to understand where Veterans are coming from and what's required for new credentials



# To gain a more in depth understanding of the challenges with CSPs and proofing across VA services, we spoke with the experts:

- 1. Carnetta Scruggs: MHV
- 2. Sonja Skinner: MHV
- 3. VSP Team: Account Migration
- 4. Dr. Carla Hill: TAP
- 5. Melissa Rebstock: VBA, VBO
- 6. Dr. Berkowitz: Data and Ethics
- 7. Matt Baum: Health Data Security
- 8. Coordinators Focus Group #1: MHV
- 9. Coordinators Focus Group #2: MHV
- 10. Non-Veteran Working Session
- 11. Laurie Baker: VBA, VACO
- 12. Danny Reed: VHIC subject matter expert
- 13. Stephania Griffin: Director, Information Access and Privacy, Privacy Officer VHA

# Experts across the VA warn—mandatory, unsupported migration will leave Veterans behind

## No Veteran left behind

Any change to login credentials and proofing requirements means some Veterans will lose access—we need to solve for the hardest to reach Veterans (rural, homebound, or unwilling to alter their digital practices), and expect serving them will **require special accommodations and additional resources**, including grandfathering some into Login.gov.

## Piece-meal doesn't work

Point-solutions to technical issues related to MHV and Login.gov will not create a truly accessible solution. To serve all Veterans a **holistic approach** to the entire login process that includes not just addressing technical challenges, but also considers messaging and process is required.

## One size does not fit all for MFA

The current MFA options will make Login.gov inaccessible for some Veterans. Support for using security key, enabling data from a VIC or VHIC to act as additional verification, as well as the possibility of waiving MFA protection altogether must all be explored. The right balance of **security and ease of access will vary depending on the Veteran**.

*From 10 stakeholder sessions conducted that spanned TAP, VBO, MHV, and ethics of security & compliance in Sept 2022.*

Shaping the path forward

It's imperative to understand what paths to Login.gov adoption resonate with Veterans and how we can help them avoid the challenges

# How we shaped our research

# Our research goals

1

Understand how we can **intervene** to ensure that new generations of Veterans use Login.gov or ID.me to access My HealtheVet from the start.

2

Understand what **in-person support** will enable Veterans to create and use a Login.gov account to access My HealtheVet.

3

Understand how the greatest number of Veterans can use **multi-factor authentication**, exploring **security keys** as an option.

4

Understand how setting up and maintaining **shared access** to Veteran information might work for Veterans and non-Veterans.

# Our research questions

Introducing  
Login.gov

- When should proactive intervention encourage the creation of a Login.gov account?
- What do Veterans find important or beneficial when choosing a login credential?
- How do we support Veterans and non-Veterans after they set up Login.gov?
- How do we communicate the need to migrate to Login.gov?
- When people in-person proof and migrate their account, what issues arise for them?
- What resources or workflows will help with issues during in-person proofing & migration?
- How do Veterans understand the process of choosing and using a MFA method?
- Which MFA options will allow more Veterans to migrate to Login.gov?
- How can MFA support non-Veterans who need access to parts of a Veterans' information?
- Which non-Veteran users would Veterans choose to set up access for, when and why?
- How do non-Veterans imagine shared access to work for themselves and non-Veterans?

In-person  
support

Multi-factor authentication

Shared access for  
non-Veterans

# Scenarios

## Research goals

Introducing Login.gov

In-person support

Multi-factor authentication

Shared access for  
non-Veterans

## Scenario 1: Migration and re-proofing

Task 1 Task 2 Task 3 Task 4 Task 5 Task 6 Task 7 Task 8 Task 9

## Scenario 2: Migration and delayed proofing

Task 1 Task 2 Task 3 Task 4 Task 5 Task 6 Task 7 Task 8 Task 9 Task 10

## Scenario 3: Proactive creation at Eligibility and Enrollment

Task 1 Task 2 Task 3 Task 4 Task 5 Task 6 Task 7

## Intercept testing

Intercept A Intercept B Intercept C Intercept D

# Stimuli



Prototypes





We took these goals into the field for a week of research with Veterans

# Our field research was conducted at the Tampa VAMC

Scheduled interviews were held at the Primary Care Annex (PCA). We ran intercepts at the PCA and the Main Facility, in or near Eligibility and Enrollment offices.



# We spoke to 37 Veterans who had a range of experiences using My HealtheVet and Login.gov

## 10 scheduled interviews

**90-120 min each**

With Veterans who actively use MHV Premium, without a Login.gov account:

- **5** migration & re-proofing scenario
- **5** migration & delayed proofing scenario

## 24 intercepts interviews

**6-20 min each**

- **14** with Veterans who actively use MHV with or without Login.gov, focused on migration to Login.gov
- **10** with Veterans who don't use MHV or Login.gov, intercepted during VHIC or other eligibility appointment, focused on proactive adoption of Login.gov

*Note: We intercepted 3 additional Veterans who were not migration or proactive, but with relevant experience that could provide insight.*

# More detail on participant's demographics

<b>Login.gov Adoption Discovery</b>																	
final # of participants	10	# of AT users	0	# of no shows	3												
Category	%	Target	Study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
<b>Veterans</b>																	
Based on current VA statistics																	
Age 55-64+	50.00%	5	6	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Cognitive Disability	50.00%	5	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mobile user	50.00%	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Rural	25.00%	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
No degree	25.00%	3	4	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other than honorable	21.00%	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Immigrant origin	17.00%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Women	10.00%	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Expat (living abroad)	0.40%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Race</b>																	
Based on VA's projected statistics																	
Black	15.00%	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	
Hispanic	12.00%	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Biracial	3.90%	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Asian	3.00%	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Native	0.30%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>LGBTQ+</b>																	
LGBTQ+ Veterans are 5 times as likely to have PTSD																	
Gay, lesbian, or bisexual	-- %	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Transgender	-- %	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Nonbinary, gender fluid, ge	-- %	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Assistive Tech (AT)</b>																	
Ask an a11y specialist to help you complete this. Targets are for a general population.																	
Beginner AT User	50.00%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

[Participant Tracker in Google Sheets](#)

We met or exceeded VA research targets for age, rural participants, women and participants without a degree.

But our findings may not include the perspectives of the following underserved Veteran groups, those:

- with a cognitive disability
- who identify as Native
- who identify as LGBTQ+
- who are assistive tech users

And we don't have data on whether Veterans included in our study have mobile devices, were other than honorable, or, are of immigrant origin.

We recommend studies with these underserved groups in the future.

**Insight 1**

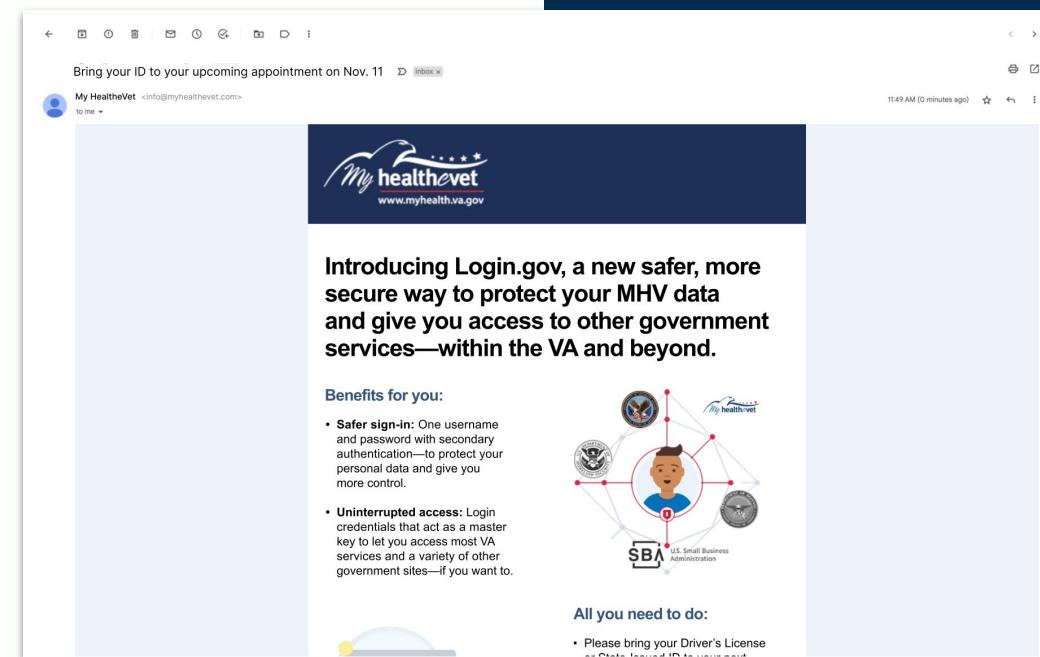
“If Login.gov is the preferred method, the VA has to say that and stop providing options.”

Participant 9, Veteran Interview

# Setting up a new credential is frustrating for Veterans if it's made to seem like a choice or the need is unclear

Messaging that suggests setting up a new credential is optional, when it's actually required, is frustrating for Veterans. They want clear instructions about what is expected of them.

And if Login.gov is the only option available for accessing valued services, Veterans will use it, but they'd like to know the reason for the changing requirements. Transparency around government decisions and spending instills trust and supports Veterans to embrace change.



## **Insight 2**

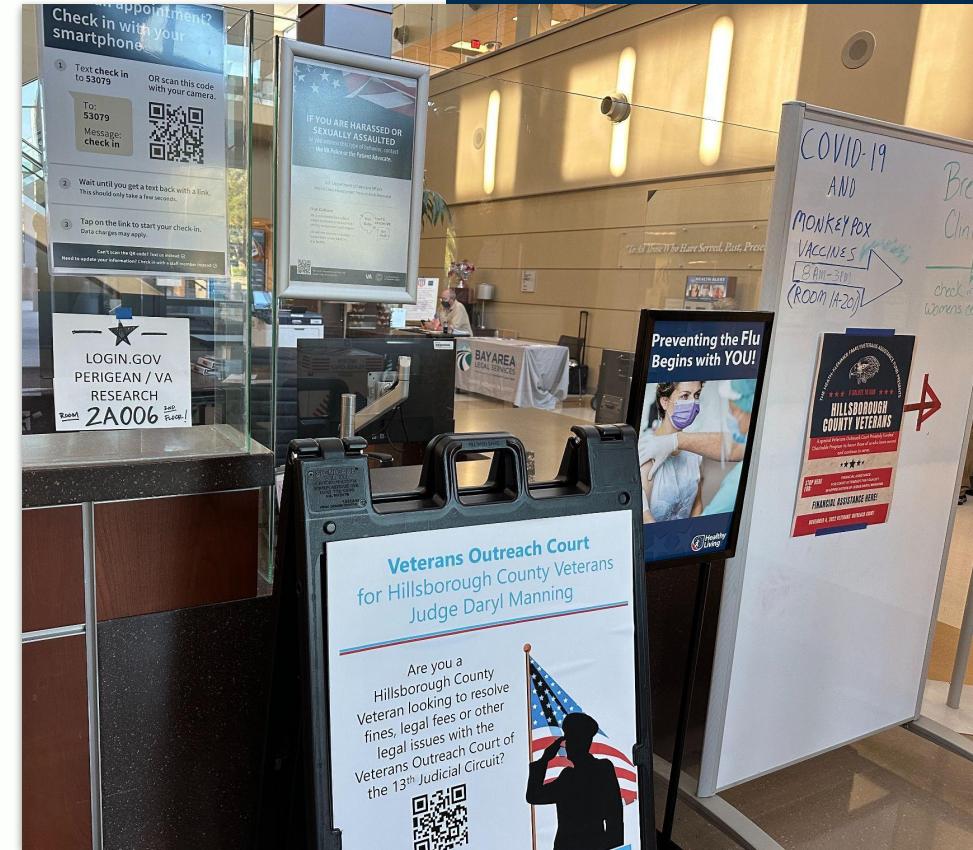
**“I would walk away at this point unless someone is on the phone helping me [with my password].”**

Participant 7, Veteran Interview

# Knowing humanized and dedicated support is available, motivates Veterans to setup and use a credential

Veterans expect the VA to respect their independence, which means making it easy to navigate set up on their own terms. Although Veterans are competent and familiar with login and setup processes, they do tend to have limited troubleshooting skills.

This means that knowing humanized, dedicated help is available throughout the journey, makes Veterans more willing to set up and continue to use a new credential.



### **Insight 3**

“I would set up Login.gov at the end of my doctor’s appointment, while I’m here. I’d rather get more done in a single period.”

Participant 26, Veteran Intercept

## Being **identity proofed at another appointment**, and, as the start or end to account setup, is more convenient for Veterans

Setting up Login.gov alongside another VA appointment is a welcome convenience for Veterans, as long as it represents a definitive start or end to the process. But, if it creates another ongoing process then Veterans are less likely to see it through.

Moving between online and offline touchpoints can create confusion – but clarity on what to bring, why you're identity proofing and how it won't affect your existing appointments or accounts, helps put Veterans at ease.



#### **Insight 4**

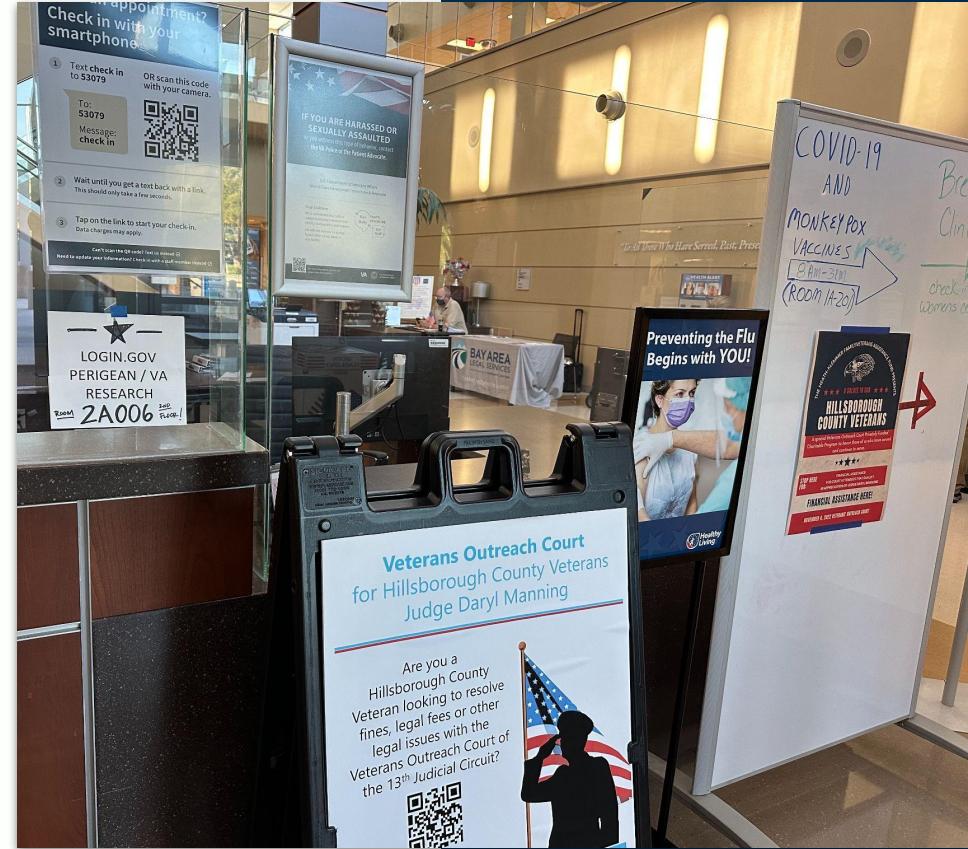
“I understand that they are trying to be secure, but I also know that when it comes to the internet, nothing is under lock.”

Participant 4, Veteran Interview

# Veterans see security as the VA's responsibility, but are motivated to be careful if it puts their benefits access at risk, or they understand how their actions affect fellow Veterans

While Veterans may distrust the government, they tend to overestimate its online security and feel it's the responsibility of the VA to make sure things are secure.

Many Veterans perceive little risk around their medical information being hacked, but are concerned about not being able to access their doctors and prescriptions through My HealtheVet. When considering data concerns, Veterans are more motivated by keeping fellow Veterans' data safe than their own.



### Insight 5

“We’ve all experienced the ‘oh, my God, where’s my rifle!?’ Veterans aren’t going to want to be accountable for [a security key] since there’s too much ingrained trauma there.”

Participant 7, Veteran Interview

## Perceived ease of use and complex views on security inform Veterans' multi-factor authentication choices

Perceived ease of use drives Veterans' security and multi-factor authentication choices. While they might say security is a priority, in practice, Veterans make choices based on ease of use.

Ingrained responsibility for government-issued property undermines the perception that a security key from the VA would be an easy and low-stress MFA option. And while biometrics can at first feel like a violation, through repeated exposure it's increasingly embraced as an easy option requiring no memory.



### **Insight 6**

“I seem to press ‘My HealtheVet’ more often than not. I think it’s because that is where I’m going. It feels more direct, like it’s getting me right in.”

Participant 10, Veteran Interview

# Veterans will choose whichever login credential is familiar, or, seems more direct to complete a task

When Veterans gravitate towards familiarity. If they're used to logging in to My HealtheVet using DS Logon, they will continue to do so, even after they've set up Login.gov. And in some cases, Veterans will choose a particular login credential because it appears to be the most direct route to complete the task at hand.

Familiarity also helps Veterans who struggle to remember their password, a common and major pain point.



## Sign in



## Or create an account

- [Create an account with Login.gov](#)
- [Create an account with ID.me](#)

## Having trouble signing in?

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### **Insight 7**

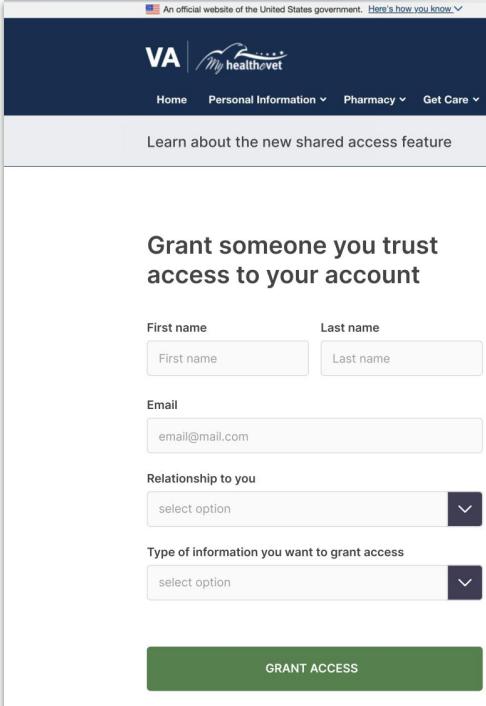
“It depends on my trust in the person who I give access, what I would give them access to. My husband could have full access, but my children, would be able to see my medications only.”

Participant 15, Veteran Intercept

# Veterans don't think to share access to their healthcare information until life altering events make it necessary

Shared access asks Veterans to consider who they trust and who will take care of them in the future, which can evolve or change over time.

With more complex care situations, caretakers recognize the need for nuanced permissions when accessing a Veterans' information. Veterans and their support systems find it important that a Veteran is able to grant and revoke shared access and see exactly what has been accessed by others.



The screenshot shows the VA My HealthVault website's "Grant someone you trust access to your account" page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like Home, Personal Information, Pharmacy, Get Care, Track Health, Research Health, and MHV Community. Below the navigation, a sub-header reads "Learn about the new shared access feature". The main form area has fields for First name and Last name, both with placeholder "First name" and "Last name". There's also an Email field with placeholder "email@mail.com". A Relationship to you dropdown menu is set to "select option". Another dropdown for Type of information you want to grant access is also set to "select option". At the bottom of the form is a green "GRANT ACCESS" button.



A photograph of two women. An older woman with short grey hair is sitting on a couch, looking at a white tablet held by a younger woman with curly hair. They appear to be in a home setting with a lamp visible in the background.

## Additional insights

1. Passwords represent the biggest point of friction in ongoing use of a login credential. Veterans find passwords difficult to remember, particularly if they are required to update them often. They end up losing access to their My HealtheVet accounts (or having them deactivated) due to inability to login.
2. Veterans choose to use ID.me because it helps them get access to discounts and other retail benefits.
3. Frustrating past experience with helplines, in general, makes Veterans hesitant to call a helpline for support with Login.gov.
4. Veterans expect identity proofing in-person to take around 5 to 10 minutes.
5. Once Veterans are logged in, they find immense value in My HealtheVet, as a useful, convenient and easy-to-use service.

# Bringing insights forward into next steps

# From insights to recommendations

- Explain the need for Login.gov setup through consistent, contextual reminders and emphasis on help and ease.
- Help Veterans understand their role in ensuring continued access to VA services and protecting fellow Veterans.
- Make it easy to bundle identity proofing with existing appointments.
- Provide in-person support with account creation and use, including identity proofing in-person.
- Help Veterans become familiar with Login.gov by making it an obvious default.
- Recommend multi-factor authentication options that are appropriate and meet each Veterans' specific needs.
- Encourage Veterans to set up shared access early-on, or, when a life altering event occurs.
- Help Veterans periodically review who has access to their information, so they stay in control and grant the right permissions.
- Provide dedicated, supportive help at every step and reach out to those who struggle with setup or use.

The big picture

# A service blueprint



[Service blueprint](#)

# Highlighting three Veteran journeys with a focus on re-proofing with in-person support

**Veteran journeys** | The major phases the Veteran experiences are shown sequentially, including the detailed steps and where the experience may shift from online to in-person.



## Re-proofing

Create a Login.gov account online and ID-proof again online or in-person



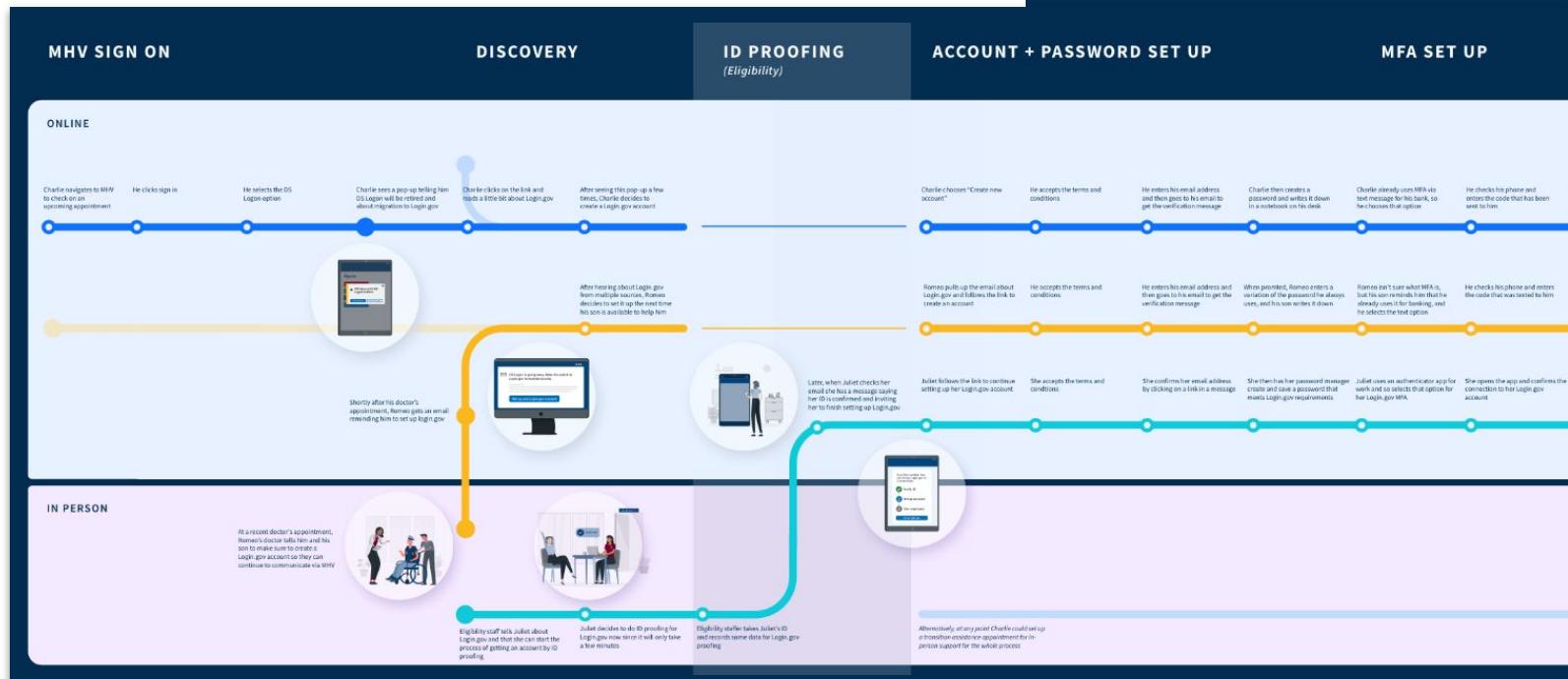
## Inherited proofing

An existing account is migrated to Login.gov without ID-proofing again



## Proactive proofing

Create a Login.gov account during Eligibility and ID-proof first, in person

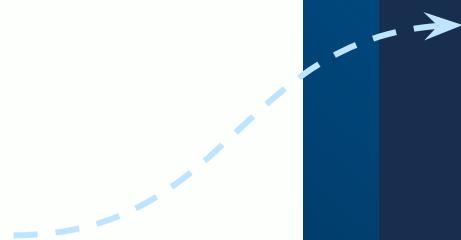


# Demonstrating how people, processes, and technical capabilities interact to deliver a valuable experience

**People & places** | Identifies what employees & partners (Login.gov) are doing to support the customer experience. Includes systems interaction, ongoing processes, hand-offs, and direct Veteran contact.

**Touchpoints & interventions** | Identifies what partners are doing, in context, via which touchpoint and for what purpose. Includes in-context description of systems and interactions within the organization.

**Policies & systems** | Identifies the behind-the-scenes applications and software necessary to support Veteran and employee experiences.



## Veteran experience variations

## Digital touchpoints

## People

## Places

## Physical touchpoints

## Concept interventions

## MHV SIGN ON

Navigate to MHV

Click sign-in button

Select DS Logon

If Veteran clicks on Login.gov instead, they would skip the next step and move to "Learn about Login.gov".

Re...

Web browser

MHV sign-in flow

MHV sign-in flow

Me...

VA.gov

Me...

Me...

Intercept Veterans when DS Logon or My HealthVet credentials are unavailable

Co...

Intercept and Tr...

Co...

# Moving from concepts on a blueprint to **themes** or **epics**

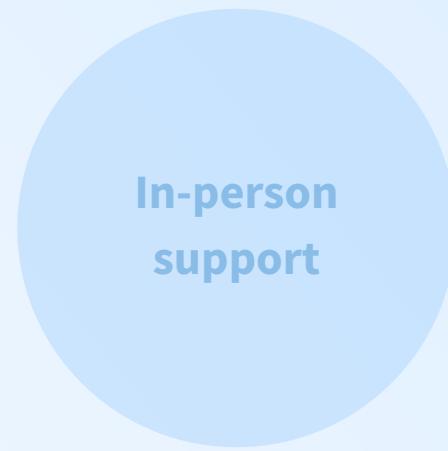
**Legacy  
credential  
migration**

**Login.gov  
proactive  
adoption**

**In-person  
support**

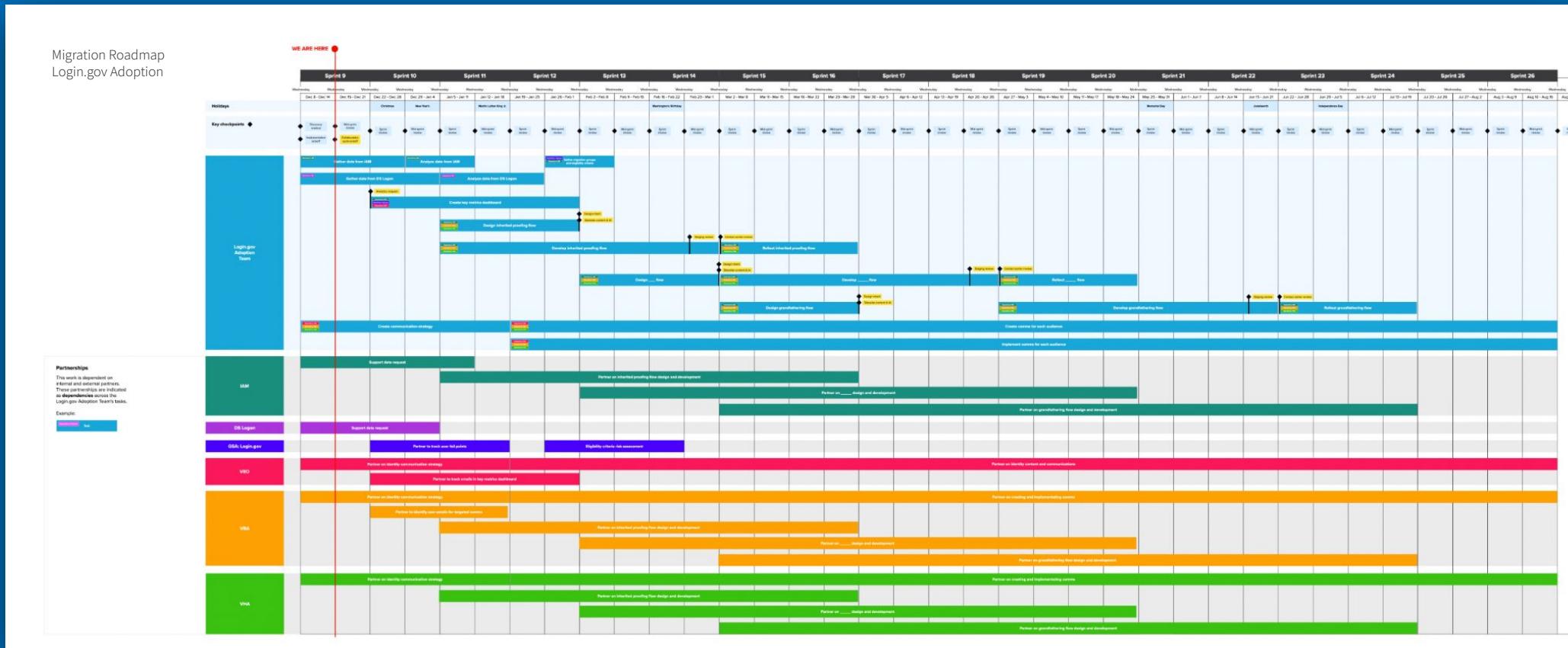
**Non-Veteran  
user roles**

# We're focusing on legacy credential migration first



Next steps

# We will share a Migration Roadmap with you soon



# Questions?



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

