

VA IDENTITY PRODUCT

Sprint 5 demo

Wednesday, October 26, 2022



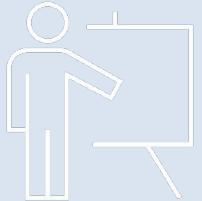
U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



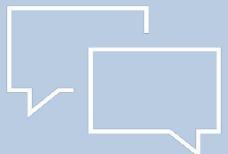
At the end of each sprint on Wednesday, the team will run sprint reviews to showcase the sprint's work for approval.

The purpose of this meeting is:

1 To demo the accomplishments or functionality that was accomplished over the past sprint



2 To get feedback and insights early and often



3 To create transparency for anyone interested on the product and progress



The Discovery team

Core team, design research



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Tyler Gindraux
Sr. UX Researcher,
Key Personnel

Areas of focus

Priority 1

MHV Coordinators in-person proofing (and remote video)

MHV Coordinators have direct contact in-clinic with Veterans nationwide, and therefore have greater understanding of various challenges Veterans face. MHV Coordinators have potential to guide the migration toward Login.gov especially for Veterans needing in-person proofing.

Priority 2

Non-Veteran user roles focusing on Caregivers, Beneficiaries, and Delegates

There are hosts of non-Veteran users that would require Login.gov and related identity proofing. Currently there are no VA-wide agreed upon definition of these users or clarity on their use cases and needed levels of access. The primary user roles to investigate are delegates, caregivers, and beneficiaries. These individuals will need the ability to identity proof in person at VA facilities.

Priority 3

Inherited proofing/Migration of MHV users to Login.gov

There is an opportunity to leverage previous identity proofing to streamline the transition to Login.gov for existing users. Differing security standards of legacy proofing options is required to meet Login.gov standards. The end goal is to simplify the migration process for existing users.

Priority 4

Security keys as an MFA option distributed during in-person proofing

Some users struggle with using Multi-Factor Authentication. Could MHV Coordinator provide these users with security keys as an alternative?

Priority 5

TAP curriculum evaluation

The TAP curriculum is out-of-date when it comes to login for VA services and benefits. It should be updated to remove DS Logon and encourage users to use Login.gov from the start. *This area has unknowns, a lack of contact points and relationships, and a lack of general knowledge.*

What our Sprint 5 goals were:

- Upcoming interviews: Laurie Baker & Danny Reed
- Sprint 5 demo expectations
 - Sprint 5 mid-sprint will serve as lightweight demo deck
 - Sprint 6 demo will include research findings
- Field Research Approval
 - Research Plan
 - Discussion Guides
 - Research Stimuli Creation
 - Practice Internal Interview (10/20)
- Begin Field Research

Today's agenda

- 10 min** Program status
- 10 min** Field research plan
- 3 min** Disability considerations
- 10 min** Non-Veteran user roles
- 5 min** Next steps



Business owners and SMEs consulted

Completed interviews

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

Upcoming interviews

Stephania Griffin

- about the legal and policy aspects of User Roles and definitions of 'Delegation' and other roles etc

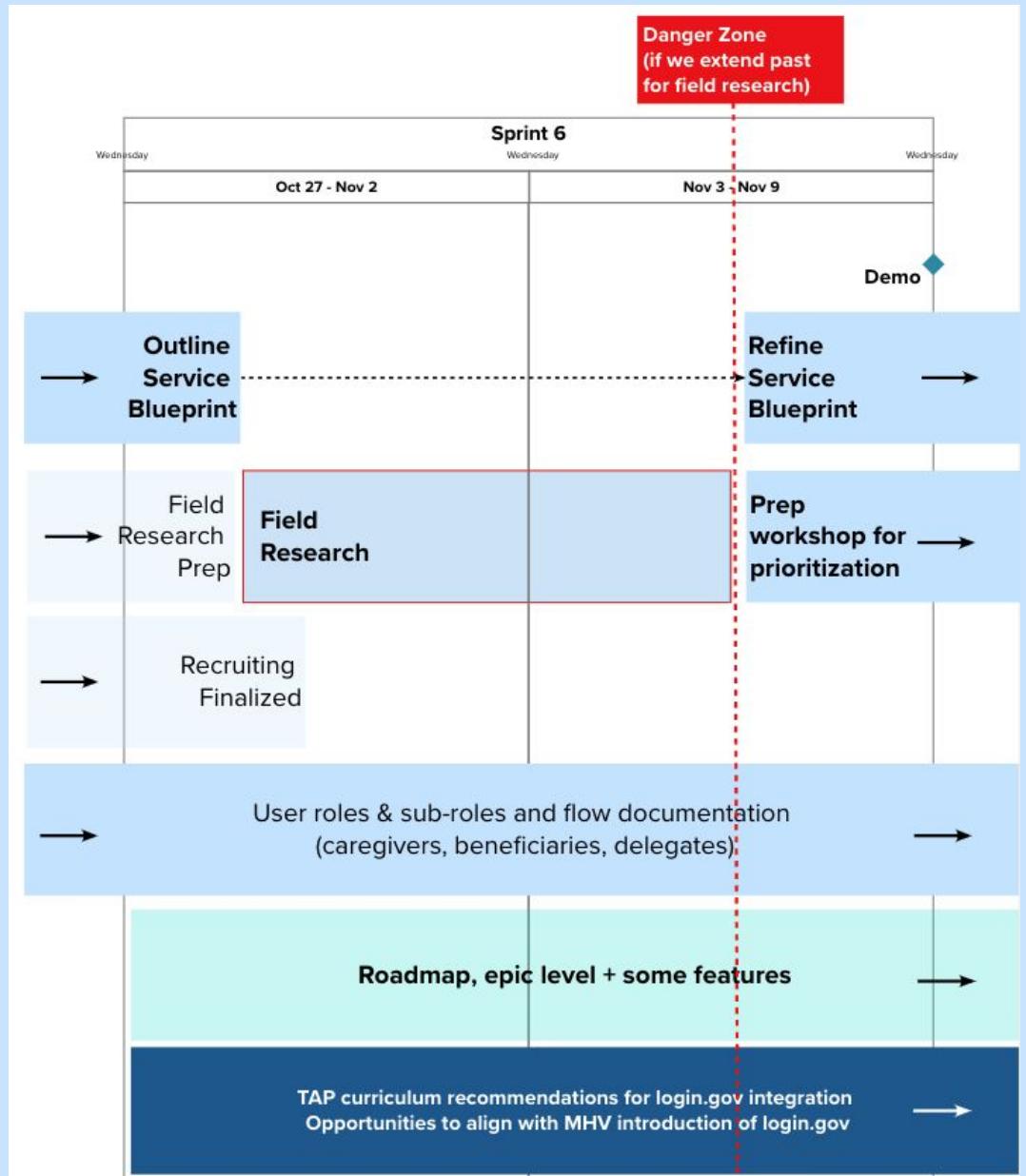
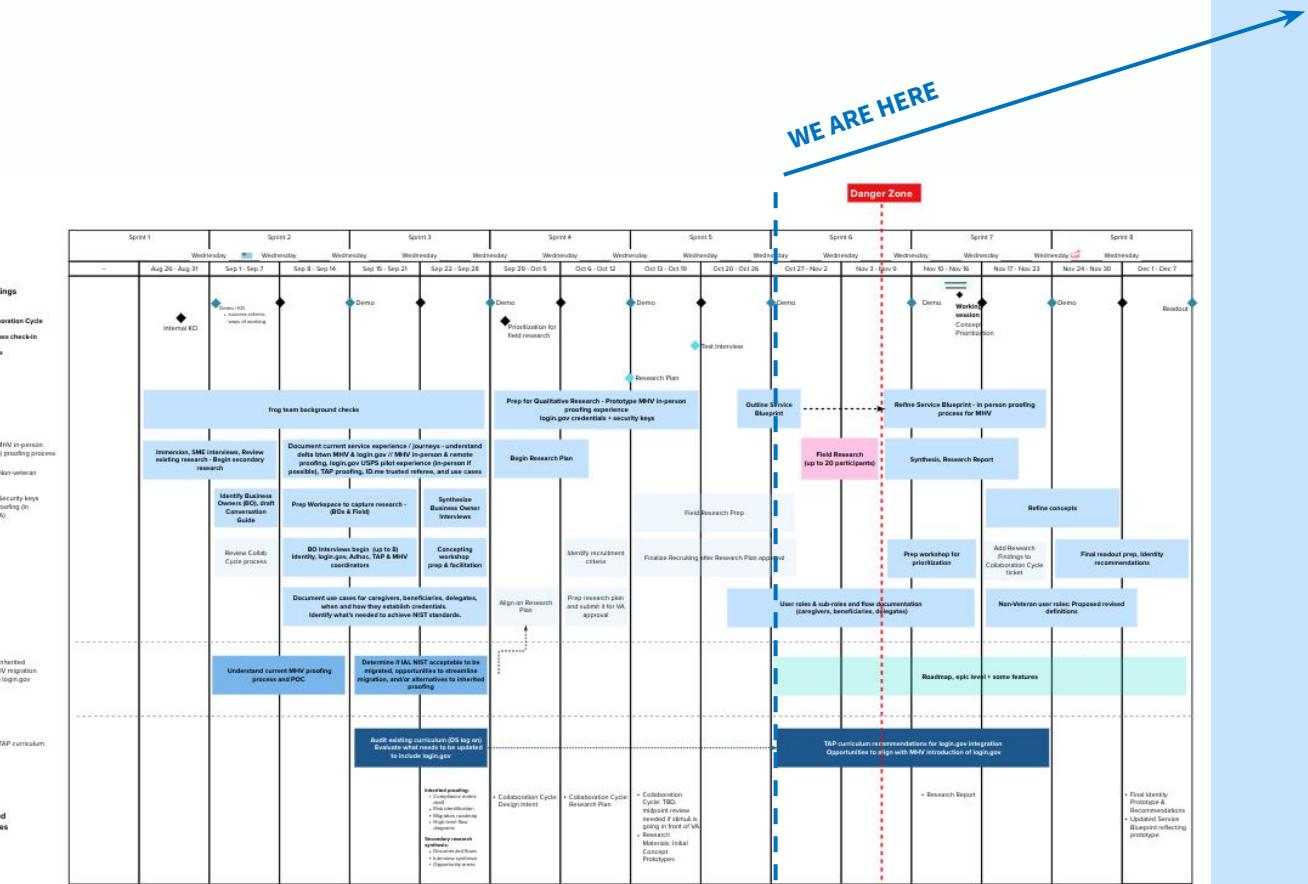
On hold

PHR policy group lawyers

- to schedule once team holds more defined these roles and improve the user experience

Our plan

A closer look to the sprint ahead...



While we wait for field research

Pre-work opportunities:

- TAP curriculum
 - Pulled forward
- Service Blueprint framework
 - create structure, what we know, will refine post research
- Backlog set-up
 - same as above

Continuing on:

- Non-Veteran user role definition & flow documentation
- Artifact refinement for field research

Dependencies, risks, blockers

Dependencies:

- Peregian recruiting, which impact
 - Field research locations & approvals
 - Finding contacts at selected VAMCs to coordinate with
 - Travel Planning & Approvals
- Confirmation: VA is closed Nov 11
- Numbers of MHV Premium accounts which have linked credentials (Login.gov, DS Logon, ID.me) to help identify how many accounts are eligible for inherited proofing
- Number of "eligible" accounts for inherited proofing which also have also identity proofed for a VHIC card

Risks:

- Recruitment pace putting project timeline at risk
 - Without swift improvement, project timeline will be negatively impacted (1-2w minimum)
- Mitigation plan:
 - Expanded recruitment criteria
 - Exploring 2nd location feasibility (DC)
 - ~~Explored incentive increase~~
 - ~~Considered non-VAMC location~~

Blockers:

- ~~VA larger file & videos access (requires google access)~~
 - Mitigated; MO team members have access behind firewall
- ~~MHV Premium data~~
 - Received requested data; will demo what we have thus far



Field research updates

Our plan for field research

Location

- **Tampa VAMC + DC (Pending approval):** Perigean is recruiting in Tampa and will begin recruiting in DC when we get approval from the local VAMC

Participants

- A diverse group of 12–14 who are active MHV Premium users who do not have a Login.gov account. Ideally some or all would be Veterans who have tried and failed to set up a Login.gov account.
- A diverse group of 6–8 Veterans who do not currently have a MHV account. Ideally these users would have recently signed up for or received a VHIC.

Research Goals

- Understand how we can intervene proactively to ensure that new generations of Veterans use Login.gov or ID.me to access MHV from the beginning.
- Understand what in-person support will enable Veterans who have technical or other challenges to create a Login.gov account and use Login.gov to access their MHV account.
- Understand how security keys and other options could MFA more accessible to Veterans.

Work to-date

Mid-Sprint Review (10/5)

Discuss proposed research approach, concepts and flows. Key Feedback:

- Add deferred proofing flow

Learning from Past Research

- Met with Kristen via the Check In Team about intercept testing and working with site admin
- Met with MO's Carolyn about collaboration cycle

Initial Review with Shane (10/7)

Sprint 4 Demo (10/12)

Discussed deferred proofing flow.

Submitted Research Plan (10/12)

Participant recruitment kicked-off with Perigean (10/17)

Pilot Interview (10/20)

Research schedule (in-progress)

VAMC - Tampa, FL:

MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
31-Oct	01-Nov	02-Nov	03-Nov	04-Nov
930a	930a	930a	930a	930a
12p	12p	12p	12p	12p
12p	12p	12p	12p	12p
230p	230p	230p	230p	230p
230p	230p	230p	230p	

Research Overview: *Key focus areas & variation in flow*



Introducing Login.gov



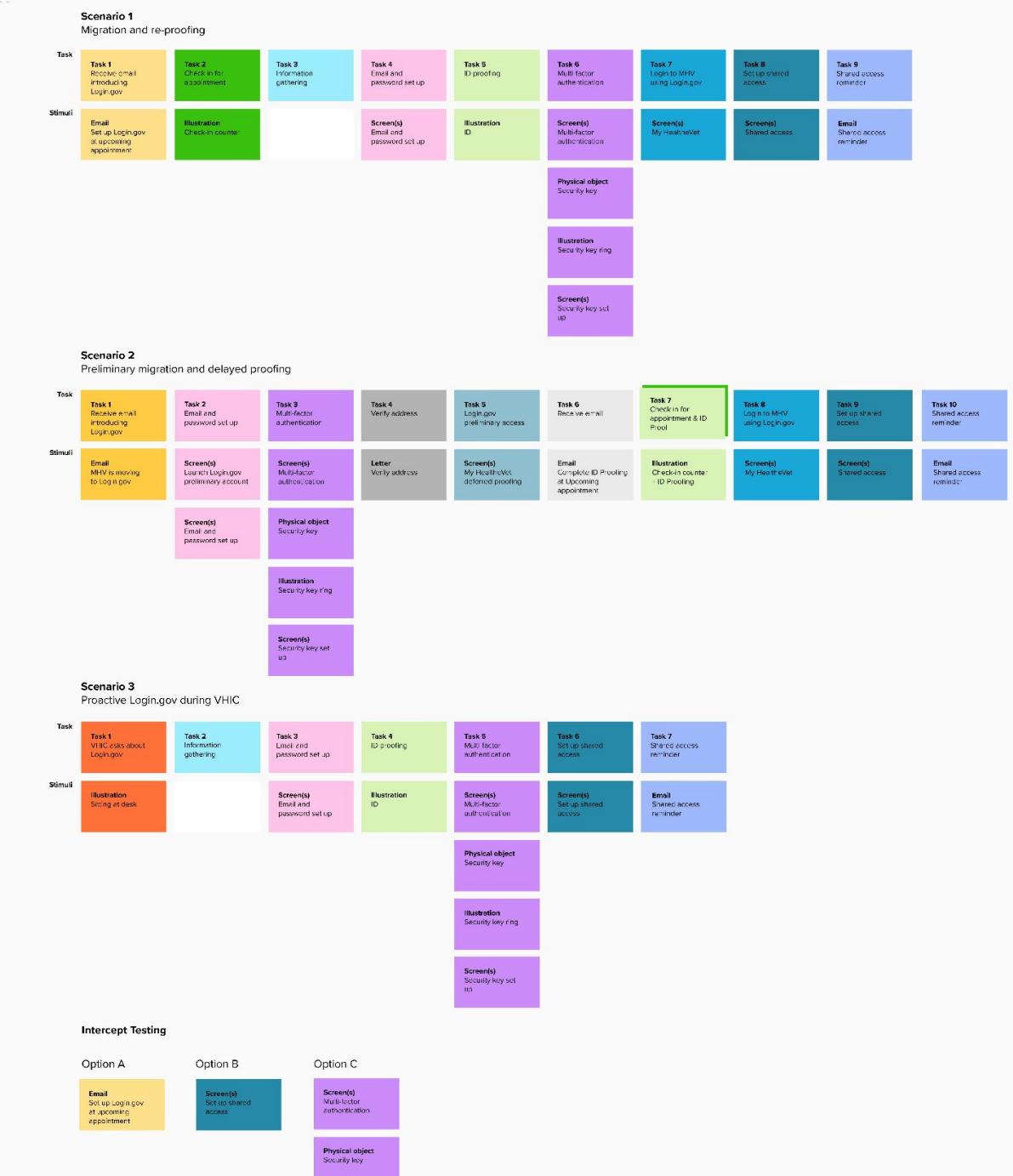
In-person ID Proofing



MFA with Security Key



Shared Access for Non-Veteran Users



Scenario 1: *Migration & re-proofing*

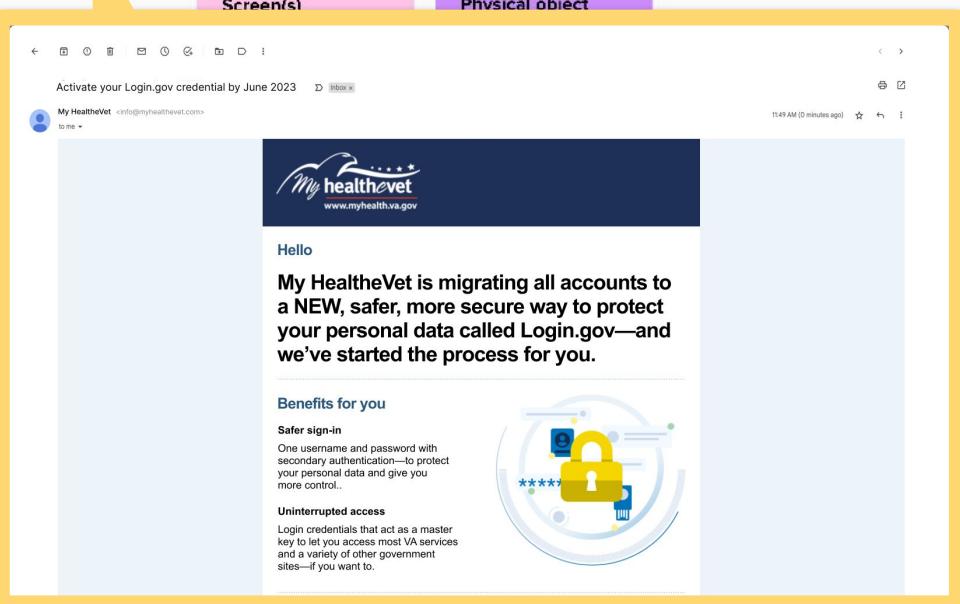
Task	Task 1 Receive email introducing Login.gov	Task 2 Check in for appointment	Task 3 Information gathering	Task 4 Email and password set up	Task 5 ID proofing	Task 6 Multi-factor authentication	Task 7 Login to MHV using Login.gov	Task 8 Set up shared access	Task 9 Shared access reminder
Stimuli	Email Set up Login.gov at upcoming appointment	Illustration Check-in counter		Screen(s) Email and password set up	Illustration ID	Screen(s) Multi-factor authentication	Screen(s) My HealtheVet	Screen(s) Shared access	Email Shared access reminder
									

Physical object
Security key

Illustration
Security key ring

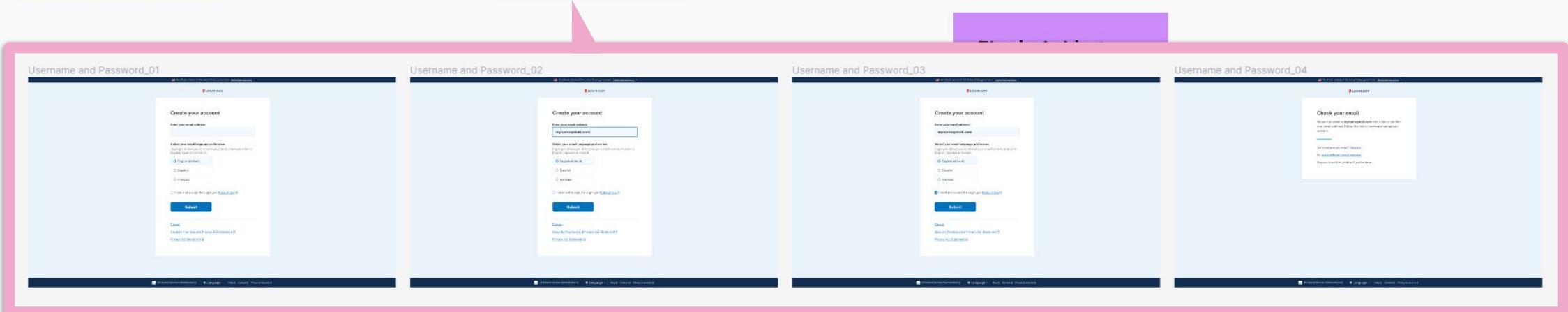
Screen(s)
Security key set up

Scenario 2: Migration & delayed proofing

Task	Task 1 Receive email introducing Login.gov	Task 2 Email and password set up	Task 3 Multi-factor authentication	Task 4 Verify address	Task 5 Login.gov preliminary access	Task 6 Receive email	Task 7 Check in for appointment & ID Proof	Task 8 Login to MHV using Login.gov	Task 9 Set up shared access	Task 10 Shared access reminder
Stimuli	Email MHV is moving to Login.gov	Screen(s) Launch Login.gov preliminary account	Screen(s) Multi-factor authentication	Letter Verify address	Screen(s) My HealtheVet deferred proofing	Email Complete ID Proofing at Upcoming appointment	Illustration Check-in counter + ID Proofing	Screen(s) My HealtheVet	Screen(s) Shared access	Email Shared access reminder
	Screen(s)	Physical object								
	 <p>The screenshot shows an email inbox with one message from 'My HealtheVet' with the subject 'Activate your Login.gov credential by June 2023'. The email body contains text about the migration to Login.gov and highlights benefits like safer sign-in and uninterrupted access, accompanied by a lock icon.</p>									

Scenario 3: *Proactive Login.gov during VHIC*

Task	Task 1 VHIC asks about Login.gov	Task 2 Information gathering	Task 3 Email and password set up	Task 4 ID proofing	Task 5 Multi-factor authentication	Task 6 Set up shared access	Task 7 Shared access reminder
Stimuli	Illustration Sitting at desk		Screen(s) Email and password set up	Illustration ID	Screen(s) Multi-factor authentication	Screen(s) Set up shared access	Email Shared access reminder

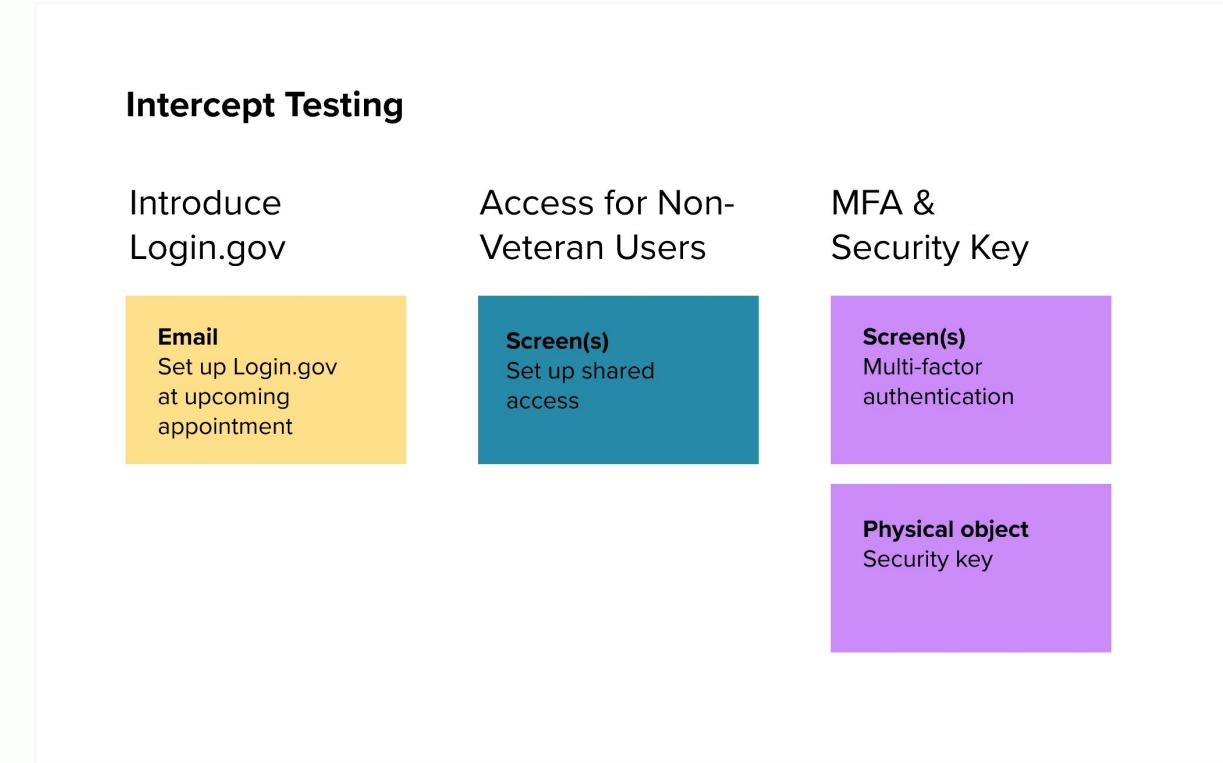


Screen(s)
Security key set up

Intercept testing: *Exploring key questions from the scenarios*

Research Plan

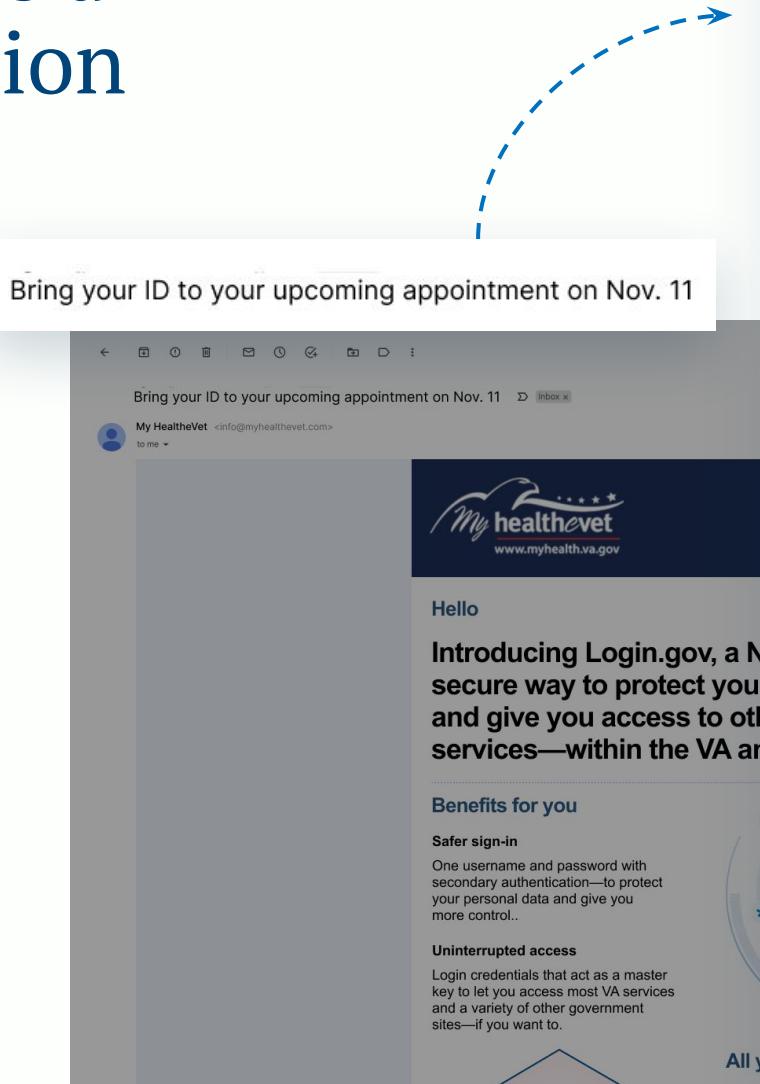
- Approach Veterans while waiting for an appointment
- 6-minute protocol
- Solicit feedback on how we are messaging 3 key areas
 - Introducing Login.gov and the process to create an account
 - Feature to support non-Veteran users accessing Veteran's MHV information
 - MFA and use of security key
- Researcher will provide brief context and share an email or screen communicating the concept
- Goal: 5 intercepts focusing on each area for a total of 15



Communications: It's a portal not a destination

Updates

- Focus on security benefit first and extended access second
- Call out clear next steps
- Focus on simple language not metaphor
- Clearly connect to upcoming appointment
- Use existing visual language from login.gov
- Include a call to action to indicate intention



Introducing Login.gov, a new safer, more secure way to protect your MHV data and give you access to other government services—within the VA and beyond.

Benefits for you:

- **Safer sign-in:** One username and password with secondary authentication—to protect your personal data and give you more control.
- **Uninterrupted access:** Login credentials that act as a master key to let you access most VA services and a variety of other government sites—if you want to.



All you need to do:

- Please bring your Driver's License or State-Issued ID to your next appointment on:
- Monday, Nov. 11th at 10:00am
- Plan to stay an extra **20 minutes**. A VA employee will assist you in setting up your account.
 - Let us know if you're in:

Yes, I will bring my ID

[No, I prefer to do it on my own](#)



It's free. It's better. It's what you deserve.

To learn more about all the benefits of Login.gov, [click here](#).

Bringing it all together

Conversation guide
Reactive migration and re-proofing
Scenario 1

Conversation Guide
Preliminary migration and delayed proofing
Scenario 2

Conversation Guide
Proactive Login.gov
Scenario 3

Conversation Guide
VA Intercepts

Conversation Guide
Reactive migration and re-proofing
Scenario 4



4 Conversation Guides





Interviewing Veterans with disabilities

Given that approximately 25% of Veterans have a service-connected disability, we should be prepared to accommodate a range of disabilities.

As researchers, our responsibility is to create a caring and supportive interview setting which also leads to higher-quality insights.

How we've prepared to support disabled Veterans during research

Understanding disability

- Each disability is different and people with the same disability might be impacted or present differently
- Disabilities can be cognitive, functional or overlapping
- Common disabilities experienced by Veterans include traumatic brain injuries, aphasia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), mobility and hearing impairments

Supporting disabled people during research

- Disabled people often receive poor treatment which influences their trust and expectations
- There are methods we can use to support disabled people during research, such as, taking breaks, asking one question at a time, using plain language, noticing changes in behaviour, asking for permission and setting clear expectations
- There are common scenarios we can learn from, such as how to support a participant when they become distressed, so we know what to do if it happens during an interview

PLANNING AHEAD

Research team

- Include researchers of different genders

Items and artifacts

- Print out the agenda
- Print out the interview questions
- Pen and paper
- Water and tissues

Room Set-up

- Confirm the building is accessible
- Include extra chairs for potential caretakers or interpreters
- Ensure table is height-adjustable or wheelchair friendly
- Seat the participant facing the entrance
- Seat the participant where they are not backlit
- Ensure there is sufficient lighting



Non-Veteran user roles

There are hosts of non-Veteran users that would require Login.gov and related identity proofing. Currently there are no VA-wide agreed upon definitions of these users or **clarity on their use cases and needed levels of access**.

The primary user roles to investigate and define are **delegates, caregivers, and beneficiaries**. These individuals will need the ability to identity proof in person at VA facilities.

What we've done so far

- ✓ Completed & integrated notes primarily from the MHV and TAP-focused interviews
- ✓ Reviewed the Non-Veteran User Roles Discovery Readout and supporting research
- ✓ Conducted additional definition session with Melissa Rebstock, Carnetta Scruggs, and Laurie Baker
- ✓ Secondary research outside of VA-produced materials
- ✓ Reviewed the MHV delegation research materials provided by Carnetta and the MHV team
- ✓ Reviewed Discovery for Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Caregivers from Shawna Hein & UX team
- ✓ Shared inputs to-date with the Identity Working Group

We've consulted with:

- Carnetta Scruggs
- Melissa Rebstock
- Laurie Baker
- Danny Reed

SMEs, informed 2021 definitions:

- Carnetta Scruggs
- Tiffany Puckett
- Matt Brown
- Tammy Scott
- Margaret Featherston
- Rebecca Bixler
- Hollie Speer
- Meg Kabat
- Scott Fagan
- Hope Coleman
- Reginald Campbell
- Terrence Minyard
- Thomas (Tommy) Lee
- Michael (Mike) Hart
- Camille Tello
- Nick Braddock

<https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/identity/user-roles/discovery/sme-interviews/README.md>

How we're moving forward

Need	Action
Explore promoting and inhibiting pressures of non-Veteran separate account creation <i>Understand what compels a non-Veteran user to set up their own account? How would having their own account make providing care easier/more accessible? (And how might it encourage a Veteran to direct their delegates/caregivers down this path vs. simply sharing a password?)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Secondary researchField research in-puts (caregivers – “shared access” – specifically)Future opportunity, beyond this phase, to validate this with users
Identify additional individuals who can clarify non-Veteran user tasks and use cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stephania Griffin, about the legal and policy aspects of User Roles and definitions of ‘Delegation’ and other roles etc.Lawyers in VA Patient Health Records (PHR) policy group
Document existing flow for delegates, caregivers, beneficiaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>How do you sign up to become one and how are these roles removed?</i><i>What are the interactions (digital/in-person)?</i><i>What systems are they accessing?</i><i>What data is stored and where?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Capturing interactions, whether digital or in-person, via application, access levels by role, and gaps/needs for online capabilities (and information sources)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Capturing process/interactions for becoming a delegate (Online Health Care Proxy and Health Care Agent)Capturing process/interactions for becoming a caregiver (General, Family Primary, and Family Secondary)
Locate and map out the hierarchy of user roles, their sub-role types, definitions, and corresponding stakeholders related to beneficiaries, delegates, and caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Capturing roles and sub-roles, definitions and sourcing of definitionsAligning stakeholders, user roles, and definitions from departments (e.g. VA.gov, VHA, VBA), their subsequent applications (e.g. eBenefits, MHV, VDT, caregivers.gov), and Record Platforms with which they integrate (e.g. MPI).

WIP: Hierarchy of roles, definitions, and governing bodies

Organizing information across all areas

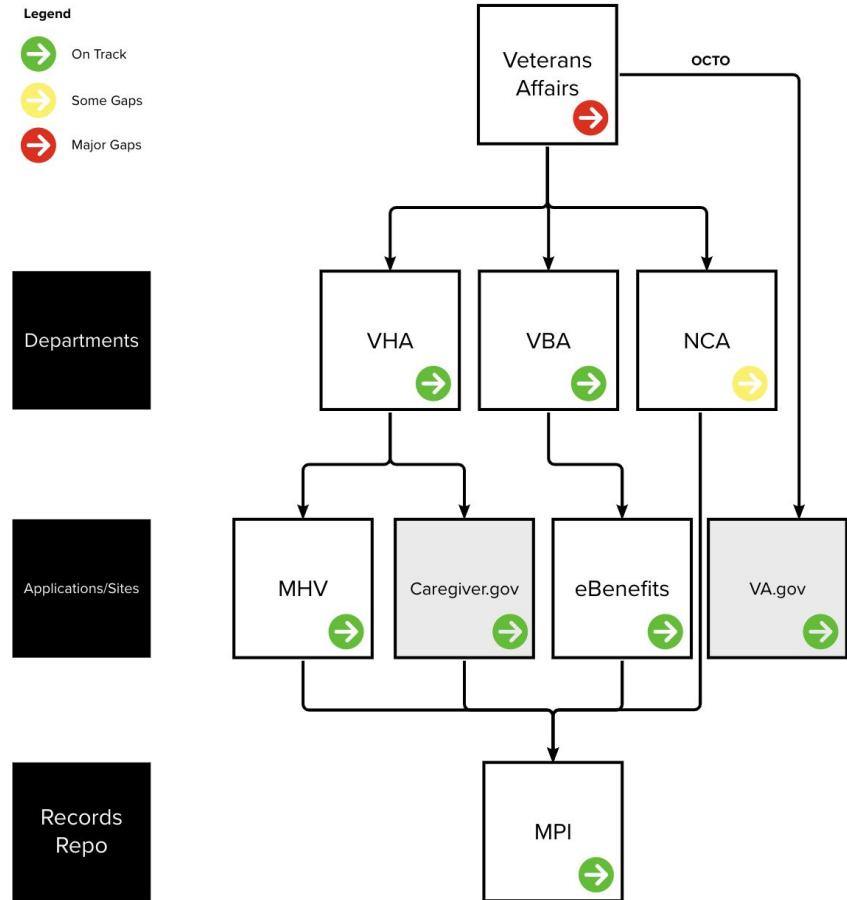
- Role
- Definition
- Source (information)
- Category (Caregiver, Delegate, Beneficiary)

Outcomes

- Address all mapped out roles
 - Assess areas of alignment and gaps
- Determine definition for each role
 - Assess where same roles may vary in definition
- Inform what stakeholders in their respective departments are still needed for further research/interviewing

Questions

- Department-level context around user roles and definitions?
- Are there any other areas to consider?
- Contact at Office of Enterprise Integration (OEI)?



eBenefits			
Term	Definition	Source	Category
Dependant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current Spouse• Previous Spouse• Dependant Child	https://www.va.gov/view-change-dependents/ https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/#:~:text=Family%20member%20benefits-,VA%20benefits%20for%20spouses%2C%20dependents,%2C%20survivors%2C%20and%20family%20caregivers,pay%20for%20school%20or%20training.	Beneficiary



WIP: Role and interaction discovery

- **Caregivers**

- Primary source of information caregivers.va.gov, providing caregiver roles, interactions and caregiver benefits
- More work needed to identify what is accessible online and needs

- **Delegates**

- VA Handbook 6510 has general information about umbrella of delegate roles
- VA Form 10-0137 for Durable POA used to assign a Healthcare Agent
- Veteran Delegate Toolkit (VDT) pilot study addresses interactions available to Online Healthcare Proxy and Veteran feedback

- **Beneficiaries**

- VA.gov has list of benefits available to each of the beneficiary role types
- More work needed to identify what is accessible online for beneficiaries and needs

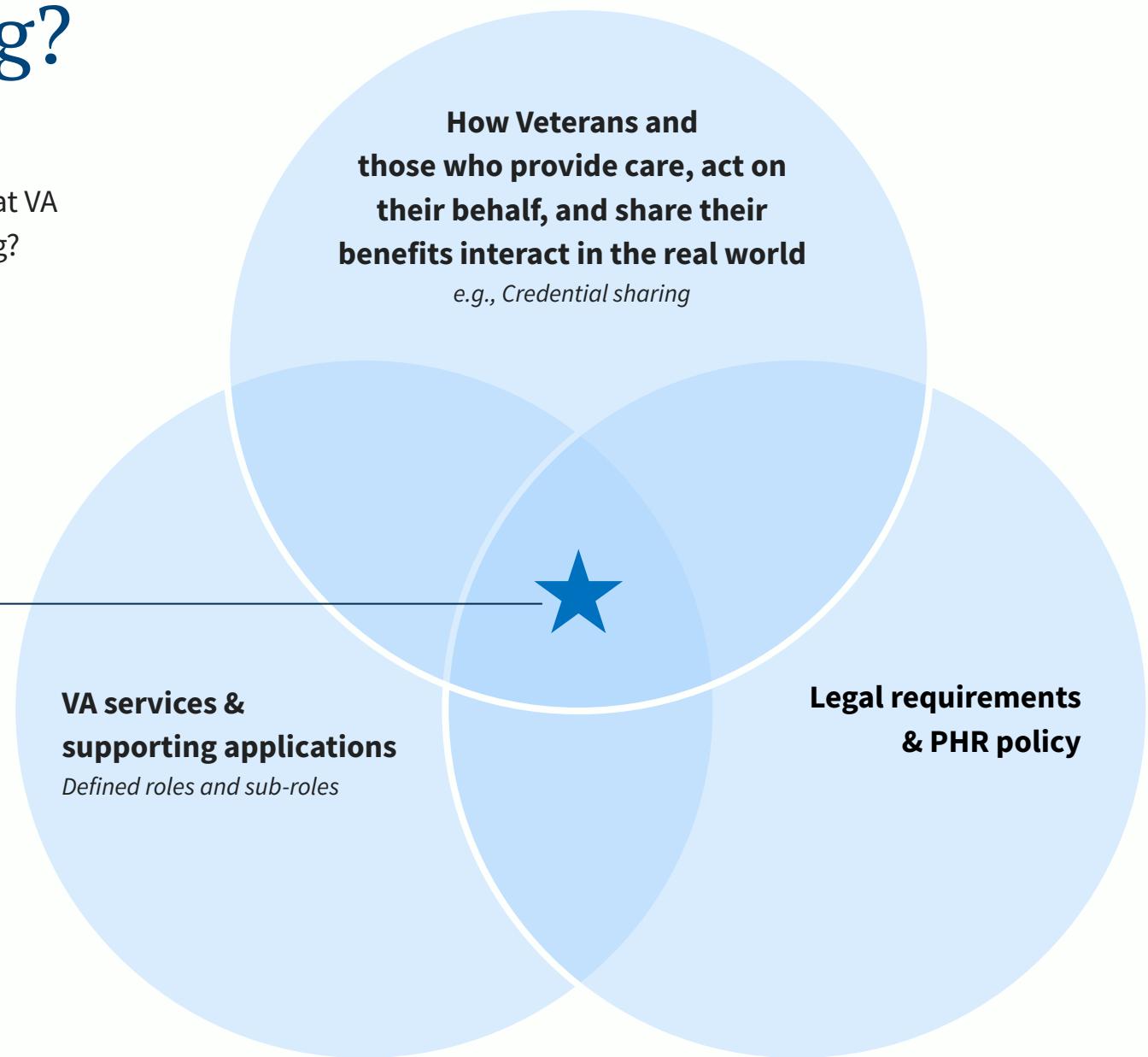
application	source	online option e:	VA Service	Service Interaction
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Compensation	Submit a claim
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Compensation	Add/remove dependent
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Compensation	Upload supporting claim documents
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Compensation	Request rep for VA claim
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Compensation	Release medical records to VA
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Compensation	track status of benefit claims
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Compensation	view payment history
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Compensation	Update contact and direct deposit info
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Pension	apply for pension benefits
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Pension	track status of benefit claims
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Pension	track status of appeal
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Pension	view payment history
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Housing	Update contact and direct deposit info
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Housing	apply for financial help for changes to home
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Housing	get COE to help with getting a VA home loan
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Education	track status of benefit claims
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Education	apply for education benefits
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Education	apply for vet readiness and employment benefits
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Education	track status of enrollment for education
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Education	verify education enrollment
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Education	transfer benefits to dependents
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Education	Update contact and direct deposit info
va.gov	va.gov	yes	Employment	educational and career counseling
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care	apply for health benefits
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care	apply for non-VA health care benefits and services for self and family through the P
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care	find and enroll in a TRICARE health plan
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care	View your health records
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care	manage your appointments
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care	manage your prescriptions
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care	purchase hearing aid batteries and prosthetic socks, and more
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Insurance	enroll for in term life insurance: Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI)
va.gov	va.gov	yes	Insurance	apply for Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI)
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Insurance	manage insurance coverage
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Insurance	update beneficiaries
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Burial	download and print forms
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Burial	apply for burial and funeral benefits
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Burial	get guidance on planning for a burial in a VA national cemetery
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Burial	apply for paying for burial costs
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Burial	request memorial items
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Burial	learn about grief counseling and transition support
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Documents and Records	find VA letters, official military records with DD 214, personnel files and health records
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Contact and Direct Dep Info	Update contact and direct deposit info
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	VA Representative	Request rep to help submit claims
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care: Pharmacy	Refill VA Prescriptions (Rx)
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care: Pharmacy	Track Delivery of VA Prescriptions
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care: Pharmacy	Get VA Prescription Shipment Notifications
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care: Pharmacy	Create Medication Lists
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care: Appointments	View VA Appointments
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care: Appointments	Schedule or Cancel a VA Appointment (online)
eBenefits	eBenefits	yes	Health Care: Messages	Secure Messaging



So, where are we going?

- What is the delta between the situations that legal definitions and VA policy address, and the situations that VA systems and service providers are actually encountering?
- What new policies are needed to fill the gap?
- How might services and applications need to evolve?

VA definitions of non-Veteran user roles that **reflect Veterans' reality**, are **shared across the organization**, and are **supported by policy, process and products**



Definition of done across across key milestones

Phase I: Discovery

Informed by VHA and VBA business owners. This work will enable a meaningful conversation with the VA PHR policy team in regards to deltas that exist between policy and services for these non-Veteran user roles.



Existing definitions	Document use cases	Document existing products & services utilized	Document workflows and known product gaps	Proposed, revised definition of roles <i>with understanding of user experience needs and applications</i>
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Phase II: Alignment

Alignment of definitions across VA decision makers.



Meet w/ Legal PHR policy team*	Organizational buy-in and comms to other teams (e.g., VHA and VBA)	Revised VA-wide definitions (and policies) that reflect use cases and application needs
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Consideration: *User validation with these roles via primary research.*

* "Meet with Lawyers in the PHR policy group - once we had a better handle on how we could define these roles and improve the user experience, it would make for a more substantive conversation with that group."

Phase III: Implementation

Product vision and plan to implement experience updates.



Detailed level of access evaluation/ requirements	Product roadmap for application updates
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MHV numbers

How users proofed for premium access

Method of proofing

Current counts of Active MHV Accounts:

- Premium: 3,209,120
- Basic Matched: 696,834
- Basic Unmatched: 36,689

Primary ID used for the Premium accounts created via In-Person Proofing

- State Issued ID: **96,554**
- Govt Issued ID: **16,719**
- Passport: **836**
- Veteran ID: **129,504**
- **Total: 243,613***

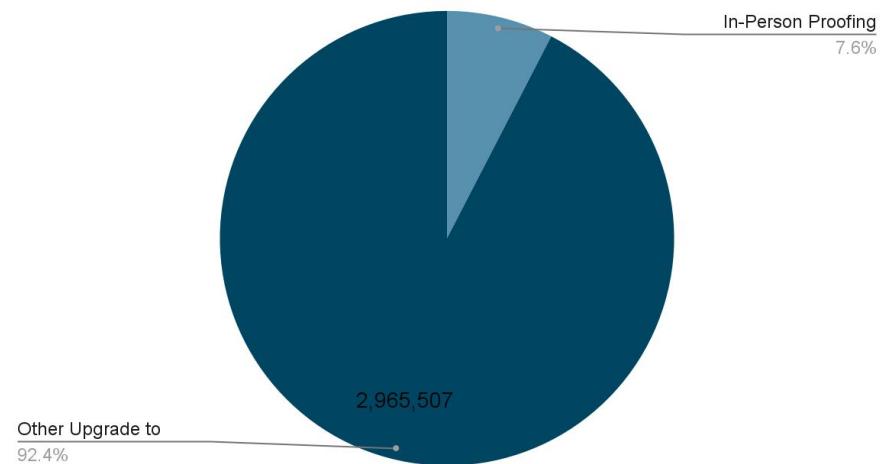
Carnetta clarified:

There is only 1 type of ID allowed: Fed/state/local issue ID with picture. The Veteran ID, Passport and State Issued ID are considered sub-types.

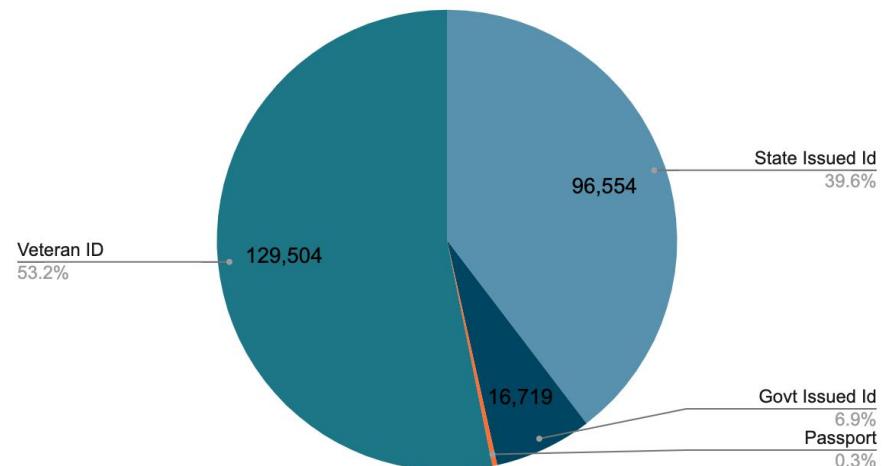
**It is possible that some of these users may have later created and linked ID.me, DS logon, or Login.gov accounts.*

**Requested: ID methods used for MHV Premium accounts via DS logon*

3,209,120 Total Premium MHV Accounts



ID Type used for In-Person Proofing





Next steps

Sprint 6 goals*:

- Field Research
- Begin research synthesis
- Prep for collaborative session
- Begin service blueprint of in-person proofing documentation
-  Non-Veteran user roles: High-level flows documented for Beneficiaries, Caregivers, Delegates

*Sprint 6 still in progress at time of delivery of November Monitoring Report

Questions?

Appendix

Non-Veteran user role

High-level themes following working session with existing non-Veteran user role definitions

with Melissa Rebstock, Carnetta Scruggs, and Laurie Baker

Consistent themes & needs

- Non-Veteran user type does not indicate required level of access, however, there is a need for tiered access for both privacy and relevancy according to role
- Programs warrant a need to reflect changes to Veterans' relationships and care needs which can be done via a non-Veteran user renewal process
- A single source of truth for non-Veteran user role profiles—integrated with all the VA applications that warrant access—would allow Veterans to control how and what information is being accessed
- Given non-Veteran users have similar responsibilities, questions, and needs as other non-Veterans and Veterans alike, they should also have access to a helpdesk
- A standardized process for non-Veteran user registration that's dependant on user type/access need would satisfy VA staff need for user recognition and tracking
- Non-Veteran users acting solely as beneficiaries should not be part of conversation regarding access to Veteran information, unless they are involved in Veteran care and are therefore another user type

Work to be done:

- Confusion and disagreement amongst user roles, about their definitions, and use cases present a *need* for the following:
 - Universally agreed upon non-Veteran user definitions
 - Shared education about the roles and official terms of use
 - Collective understanding that a caregiver must be officially recognized/registered

Caregiver, as previously defined

Research Findings

A Veteran's **caregiver** is a person who provides support to the Veteran. Caregivers could be individuals who are officially recognized by the VA, self-identified individuals, or professional caregivers.

- VHA has specific programs to recognize caregivers; the programs have specific eligibility criteria.
- Caregivers participating in the VA Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program (PCAFC) would also be beneficiaries since they receive direct payments from VA.
- There are a couple of existing channels for self-identifying caregivers to have access to Veteran information: VA Online Health Delegate Program, and the VA Fiduciary Program
- There aren't any clear rules about whether a caregiver should be allowed access to a Veteran's information; it's generally determined on a case-by-case basis.
- [Read finding 3 in the full report](#) for additional details on caregivers

However, the sentiment from working session was that **caregivers should always be officially recognized** and that the term caregiver often acts as an umbrella term.

Source: [VA's 2021 Non-Veteran User Roles Discovery Readout](#)

Caregiver

Veteran user: Any Veteran can have a caregiver whether they have a rated disability or just prefer to have their spouse/child/ friend type for them.

Colloquial use of “caregiver” term

- Officially or unofficially recognized
- Anyone who is a trusted intermediary at all involved in Veteran care - not requiring access to Veteran information
- Does not necessarily have their own account

Role definition

- Must be officially recognized by VA in VistA
- Is a beneficiary if officially VA recognized
- Is not necessarily the PoA or legal guardian
- Includes current understanding of unofficial delegate/ health care proxies
- Varies by organization (VBA, VHA)
- Can be the primary and secondary family caregivers and general caregivers
- Can include Fiduciaries, Surrogates, Power of Attorneys, or Legal Guardians
 - *A federal fiduciary is a person or legal entity authorized by VA to serve as payee of VA benefits for a beneficiary unable to manage his or her financial affairs.*
 - *A court-appointed fiduciary is a person or legal entity appointed by a state or foreign court to supervise a beneficiary unable to manage his or her financial affairs and/or that person's estate.*

Needed products / services / deliverables

- Develop a caregiver renewal process
- Standard form of ingesting information to authorize Caregivers
- Quick non-Veteran user recognition and profile verification

Use cases (revealing varied levels of access)

- Transportation (when & where are appointments)
- Prescription refills
- Messaging health care providers on Veteran's behalf
- Scheduling appointments
- Assisting a Veteran with filing a claim for benefits
- Manage monetary benefits
- Participate in / are responsible for medical decisions

Delegate, as previously defined

Research Findings

A **delegate** role exists in VHA to refer to someone who has delegate authority per the request of a Veteran through the VA online health delegation program.

- VBA does not have a specific delegate role. There is a VBA process through [VA Form 21-0845](#) that gives a 3rd party access to information for a Veteran.
- A delegate does not have to be a dependent or a beneficiary.
- Delegates can directly access some Veteran health information online, such as upcoming appointments and prescription information, in MHV and participating VA Mobile Apps. More information can be found in [finding 3.4 from the first phase of our research](#).
- A delegate cannot help a Veteran with offline health tasks.
- A VA recognized Caregiver and a Delegate would likely need to be two different types of access on VA.gov since a VA recognized Caregiver is also a beneficiary that would need to see information about their own benefits.

The term delegate elicited strong reactions from our working sessions—the more recognized term for delegate is **health care proxy**, and that official delegates only come into play when Veterans are determined incompetent.

Source: [VA's 2021 Non-Veteran User Roles Discovery Readout](#)

Delegate

Veteran user: Veteran is deemed "incompetent" (by VA or under legal disability by reason of court action). A mentally incompetent person is one who because of injury or disease lacks the mental capacity to contract or to manage his or her own affairs, including disbursement of funds without limitation.

Colloquial use of “delegate” term

- Many refer to unofficial delegates as healthcare proxies
- Trusted individual acting as a representative of the Veteran and therefore needing access to their information

Role definition

- A delegate acts on behalf of a Veteran deemed "incompetent" or "insane" by the VA for financial, medical, legal, and other benefits related purposes
- Adhering to all responsibilities held by the Delegator
- No official role recognized by VBA

Other related terms: “Health Care Agent” as Delegate

- SF VA Facility has a form for “VA Advance Directive Durable Power of Attorney For Health Care and Living Will”
- Allows veterans to name a “Health Care Agent” if they become unable to make their own health care decisions

Needed products / services / deliverables

- Ability for delegate to act as head point person and appoint additional caregivers as needed.
- Quick non-Veteran user recognition and profile verification

Use cases (revealing varied levels of access)

- Greatly overlaps with caregiver use cases (appointments, prescriptions etc.)
- Potential need to know everything about the Veteran's health
- Being recognized as a trusted individual warrants official documentation (VA Form 10-0137)
- Gaining access to Veteran information requires request (VA Form 10-5345)

Beneficiary, as previously defined

Research Findings

A beneficiary is anyone who is the direct recipient of a benefit or service from VA.

- In VBA, the term is also used to refer to a person the Veteran has named to receive their benefit in the future.
- A beneficiary could be a Veteran, or a qualifying family member.
- Each benefit has specific qualifications to determine beneficiary eligibility.
- The tasks a beneficiary would need to do on VA.gov are the same for Veterans and non-Veterans. For example, a non-Veteran beneficiary receiving education benefits should be able to update their direct deposit information or view payment history the same way a Veteran would.
- A beneficiary isn't always a dependent. E.g. VA recognized caregivers who are not dependents.
- Beneficiary data currently lives in the VA Corporate Database (sometimes called CorpDB), and is correlated to the Veteran file number. Efforts are currently underway to add a beneficiary PERSON_TYPE to MPI.

Source: [VA's 2021 Non-Veteran User Roles Discovery Readout](#)

Beneficiary

Veteran user: Any Veteran with benefits.

Colloquial use of “beneficiary” term

- NA

Role definition

- A beneficiary is an individual entitled to receive VA benefits. Beneficiaries are classified as minors, Veterans, and other adults. The latter group includes adult children incapable of self support, surviving spouses, dependent parents, and some insurance payees
- Any person(s) defined by Veteran
- Often parent/ spouse/ family member of non-Veteran user
- Can be an officially recognized caregiver

Needed products / services / deliverables

- Online access and ability to download to beneficiary letters
- Visibility into claim status and payment history and ability to file a claim and change payment information
- Easy removal of beneficiary when award ends (currently MPI is not able to recognize if other awards are currently running, Benefit Gateway Services needs to review prior to removal)

Use cases (revealing varied levels of access)

- Does not need access to Veteran's care information if only strictly acting in this role/to receive benefits
- Only need access to their own benefit information
- May also be a Veteran themselves (receiving benefits) AND the beneficiary for their spouse who has passed away

Stakeholder interviews

Laurie Baker - VBA, VACO

Interview Objective

Understand the processes, roles, user experience, and challenges around setting up and accessing Veteran benefits. In particular focusing on:

- Veteran setup of Beneficiaries and challenges with access
- Beneficiary user needs and system integration with MPI
- MPI intersections and challenges

Interviewee

Laurie Baker

VBA, VACO

Senior Management Analyst

Laurie Baker: Key takeaways

1. To date, beneficiary needs have mostly been supported by regional benefits offices. Key tasks include downloading letters, ability to access and edit claims and payment information, but it gets confusing when a user has multiple role definitions as their needs require access to the same features, but for different reasons (e.g., Employee, Beneficiary, Veteran).
2. When logging in anywhere, it's always assumed that you're a Veteran. Role-based content strategy (and access) will lessen the burden on non-Veteran support resources—which are already difficult for these roles to access.
3. The buck does *not* stop with MPI. While MPI is a wide-reaching record locator system, it has not been adopted by all services so there are dependencies to remove a role from MPI and often requires additional steps or approvals.

“This is my data, and I control it and I don't want anyone else telling me what to do.’ That mindset is very much in place on the VBA side. There seems to be no appetite for actually enforcing these decrees that come down.”

Laurie Baker

“The whole point of these enterprise systems is so they have one place to do this. Veterans don't see it as separate lines of business that don't talk to each other. I can see how would be frustrating to not know what's happening with their information [why an update didn't carry over].”

Laurie Baker

Danny Reed - VHIC and Identity Toolkit subject matter expert

Interview Objective

Understand the in-person verification process for VHIC and get his perspectives around non-Veteran user roles. In particular focusing on:

- VHIC in-person proofing with Login.gov account creation
- IAM and evidence collected during VHIC proofing for MHV Premium account migration to Login.gov
- IAM touchpoints in support of non-Veteran user roles
- Non-Veteran user categories, use cases, and user types
- MPI and how data is cross-referenced to login.gov, MHV, IAM (among others)

Interviewee

Danny Reed

IAM Architect

Danny Reed: Key takeaways

1. Recommends to use VHIC identity verification information to avoid re-proofing vs. MHV identity verification information. There's an opportunity for identity data from IAM to facilitate inherited proofing (via either push model or API) pending users have a MHV account and are level 2 proofed.
1. VHIC in-person proofing process could be used to initiate a preliminary Login.gov account creation process with inherited proofing. This could eliminate redundant proofing.
1. The VHIC proofing process is evolving and improving, e.g. SSA through SSN verification. This will provide stronger identity assurance evidence against re-proofing.

“I-9 is the standard everybody is supposed to use for proofing.”

Danny Reed

“When we started looking at MHV and what they were doing...it was not in line with I-9...anything before they start utilizing our process can just be thrown out because...there's no evidence.”

Danny Reed

“We are in contact right now and are pretty close to implementing a third party verification to SSA for the SSN process.”

Danny Reed