**Yellow Ribbon Program Information in Comparison Tool Research Findings**

**Office of the CTO - Digital Experience (OCTO-DE), Yellow Ribbon Program in Comparison Tool, Education Data Migration**

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*Once you've presented your research readout to your team, if you have a deck, insert a link to it here* [Research readout](link here)

**Jump to:**

* [Hypotheses and conclusions](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/platform/research/sharing-research/research-findings-template.md#hypotheses-and-conclusions)
* [Key findings](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/platform/research/sharing-research/research-findings-template.md#key-findings)
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* [Who we talked to](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/platform/research/sharing-research/research-findings-template.md#who-we-talked-to)

**Research Goals**

*First, set the context of this research by explaining how it fits into the Veteran’s journey. Explain what a Veteran might do before and after using this tool. What moments does this tool live in? Are there moments that matter to keep in mind? What are Veteran’s familiarity with tools like this? (do they use tools like this, or is this something new).* [*See the Veteran journey*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/platform/design/va-product-journey-maps/Veteran%20Journey%20Map.pdf)

*Then, describe your goals for this research*

[*See an example*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/find-a-va-form/initiatives/2021-post-mvp-releases/research/research-findings.md#research-goals)

1. Identify if users can find the content they are seeking.
2. Validate if users will benefit from the presentation of the YR program information in CT.
3. Discover pain points or aspects of the design that need to be altered to improve the user experience.

**Research Questions**

*Research questions here*

[*See an example*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/find-a-va-form/initiatives/2021-post-mvp-releases/research/research-findings.md#research-questions)

* Are the users able to find what they are looking for?
* Will the users benefit from the updated presentation of the YR program information in CT?
* What are the current pain points that users are facing?

**Methodology**

*Brief description of method chosen*

[*See an example*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/find-a-va-form/initiatives/2021-post-mvp-releases/research/research-findings.md#methodology)

Qualitative usability testing is the research method used to execute the testing of the feasibility of the solution. We focused on users' behaviors, preferences, and overall experiences while interacting with the following link: <https://staging.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool/institution/31937132>.

Participants were guided through tasks and asked a combination of yes/no and open-ended questions to gather their thoughts and detailed responses about their experience during a 30-minute session over Zoom. We noted down any issues, frustrations, or successes along the way.

**Hypotheses and Conclusions**

*Hypotheses or tasks for this research along with the conclusions you found If you conducted a usability test, list the success or task completion rate.*

[*See an example*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/find-a-va-form/initiatives/2021-post-mvp-releases/research/research-findings.md#hypotheses-and-conclusions)

*Hypothesis statement*

*("Maybe True", “Likely True”, “Definitely True”, “Likely False”, “Definitely False” or “Not enough information”) Why?*

1. Participants will easily find the information they are seeking if the presentation is intuitive and well-organized.
   1. TRUE: Most participants stated that the presentation of the information was informative, straightforward, simple and did not contain any extra, unnecessary information.
2. A clear and user-friendly format should enhance the participants comprehension and overall satisfaction with the Yellow Ribbon Program functionality within Comparison Tool, ultimately improving their ability to make informed decisions and participate in the program
   1. TRUE: While we found that all but one participant had not previously used the Yellow Ribbon Tool, most participants found the functionality of searching Yellow Ribbon Program Information within Comparison Tool to be a positive experience overall.

"If I were to give it like a scale of you, say one to 5, I would give it a between a 4 and a 5, be like a 4 and a half with just those little tweaks that could, you know, make it slightly more user friendly. Now I work in IT, and being as simple as possible makes it so much easier for the end user."

1. Participants will sharepotential gaps or areas for improvement in the presentation that could better meet their needs and enhance their experience.
   1. TRUE: When the participants were asked open-ended questions that included “What would you change?” there were several suggestions noted of which are included in the key findings below.

*7 Veterans answered that they are or were eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program*

*2 were not*

*6 were unsure*

*Only 1 Veteran had used the Yellow Ribbon Tool: User said it was difficult to find if they meet eligibility when using the tool.*

**Key Findings**

*The 5-10 top findings from your study should be listed here. Write your findings so that if someone reads only these bullets they can leave feeling they got useful information and the study was worthwhile. Examples might be "Most participants used the Search field to find the form, and searched for the term 'veteran health'" or "Most participants struggled with the secondary caregiver section on the form".*

[*See an example*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/find-a-va-form/initiatives/2021-post-mvp-releases/research/research-findings.md#key-findings)

1. Most participants could find the content they were seeking with a few suggestions for improvement
   1. Multiple participants suggested moving “What to know about the information displayed” below search results
   2. Some participants want to know what is relevant to them in the informational paragraph
   3. Participants do not know how to use Yellow Ribbon Program benefits
2. Many participants (8 out of 15) either selected or almost selected the “Learn More” link when asked to navigate to the Yellow Ribbon Program Information section.
3. Multiple participants made incorrect assumptions or were unclear on the content details within the school cards.
   1. Some participants did not know what “Funding Available” meant.
   2. Multiple participants reported that they would like to see how many spots remain (e.g. 4/5 spots available).
4. Most participants were able to use the pagination of the school cards easily, but some participants X out of X) recommended suggestions for improvement to the display of the search results.
   1. Some participants would like to see more than three cards display at one time
   2. One participant suggested a keyword search (e.g. “Journalism”)

**Details of Findings**

*For each finding, list details with supporting quotes and images when possible. Please****add relevant keywords/labels to your findings****selected from the*[*research repository label list*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-research-repository/labels?page=1&sort=name-asc)*. Adding keywords/labels to your findings will help others find research relevant to their work.*[*Learn how to add labels*](https://depo-platform-documentation.scrollhelp.site/research-design/adding-labels-in-the-research-repository)*in Platform documentation.*

*To add images: ![text](link - add image to github folder and link here with .png)*

**Most participants found the content they were seeking and found it useful with a few suggestions for improvement.**

Labels: label 1, label 2

*List all labels that apply to this finding from the*[*research repository label list*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-research-repository/labels?page=1&sort=name-asc)*.*

1. Multiple participants suggested moving the “What to know about the information displayed” below search results

*Supporting data: “*I will say that the predominant user interface is the stuff in bold down here. It does kind of draw away from the synopsis at the top kind of visually. So naturally, you gravitate to this, and you might visually misread this part above, unless you're a little more and deliberate, and then digesting the content."

*Supporting data:* "Again, maybe something to with a white background. The only differentiating thing is this bold. So you know, maybe a box around here, or something to say. In brief, what the yellow program is to introduce this piece, maybe in bold here to draw you to. If you wanted to read that, at least from a visual standpoint, you're drawn to that introductory statement of what this paragraph, this information, is just like this one is right here above. obviously visually, if you already know that you can go down and continue to read. But this again. This section seems at 1st glance a little lost, because your eye is naturally drawn down further in the section"

1. Some participants want to know what is relevant to them in the informational paragraph.

*Supporting data:* Some of the language doesn't really ensure the funding for the veteran when it comes time to tuition bills. Some of the language I would highlight would be "may" where it will be more assuring when it says will pay. "It's also not covering fees that that the school may be placed on the students at the time of the start of the semester."

*Supporting data:* "It's not difficult to understand. But so it doesn't really, I guess. Tell me exactly what it does for me, like as a veteran, or if I'm trying to pay for the schools"

1. Some participants do not know how to use Yellow Ribbon Program benefits

**Most participants (8 out of 15) either did not understand Task 1 or thought that the link titled “Learn more” would be the most logical place to find the Yellow Ribbon Program information section.**

Labels: label 1, label 2

*List all labels that apply to this finding from the*[*research repository label list*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-research-repository/labels?page=1&sort=name-asc)*.*

1. Most participants (8 out of 15) either selected or almost selected by verbalizing that the “Learn More” link would be the most logical place for more information when asked to navigate to the Yellow Ribbon Program Information section.

*Supporting data:* "It took me a second like when, when you would 1st ask me the question of you know, review the page, and if I could find the yellow ribbon program information. This is where you know. Learn more that at least that that line of questioning would initially have brought me here.

*Supporting data: Quote here*

**Multiple participants made incorrect assumptions or were unclear on the content details within the school cards.**

1. Multiple participants did not know what “Funding Available” meant.

Labels: label 1, label 2

*List all labels that apply to this finding from the*[*research repository label list*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-research-repository/labels?page=1&sort=name-asc)*.*

1. Multiple participants reported that they would like to see how many spots remain (e.g. 4/5 spots available).

*Supporting data:* "doesn't really help me understand if there is a cut-off, or limitations"

*Supporting data:* "Would add more statistics on this to give a realistic expectation on this funding available section. How close it is to be full or not for that school."

**Most participants (X out of X) were able to use the pagination of the school cards easily, but some participants X out of X) recommended suggestions for improvement to the display of the search results.**

Labels: label 1, label 2

*List all labels that apply to this finding from the*[*research repository label list*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-research-repository/labels?page=1&sort=name-asc)*.*

1. While the task of paging through the school cards was rated at a 1 (easy), participants suggested that they would like to see more than three cards display at one time or have the ability to choose how many to display at one time.

*Supporting data:* "Easy but little annoying that only 3 results can display." User want more results to display

*Supporting data:* user wants to be able to see everything in one go

Some participants suggested improvements to the search functionality for Degree Level.

1. One participant suggested adding a keyword search (e.g. “Journalism”)

*Supporting data:* " If I could add one thing, something cool, and there would be like keywords search. So let's say, I was only looking for schools of journalism. could type that it almost like up top, like right under the graduate type in journalism or nursing, or whatever it may be, that I'm interested in."

**Additional Insights**

*Any additional insights that aren't "key findings." These can be powerful comments from users that don’t represent a pattern in this study, but may be part of one outside this study.*

All of the stuff that you can do now with apps or programs is better, because before, when having to call somebody. you'd be oh, it's the wrong office. Well, no. The last office told me this was the right office. No, it's not. I gotta transfer you back here. And it it becomes a pain. So this stuff here where I don't. You don't really have to talk to somebody to at least see, this is a as long as it's accurate, is a pretty big step forward.

**Opportunities to enhance marketing of the Yellow Ribbon Program or the frequency or timing of the communications:** "I wish I'd known about this program before. because I actually had a situation like this where I use my post 9 11 took out student loans for the difference. And now I have student loan debt. But if I would have known about this yellow ribbon program I wouldn't be in the situation."

**Recommendations**

*Put together initial recommendations here based on your findings along with supporting evidence. Review with your team, then edit as needed.*

* Update the first paragraph to include verbiage that is different than the verbiage within the “Learn More” link to have a more direct tone to the Veteran.
  + Separate and bold the “Call to Action” statement of Contact your school... from the first paragraph.
  + *Example: The Yellow Ribbon Program may reduce your out-of-pocket tuition and fee costs at participating colleges and universities. By enrolling, you’ll benefit from a contribution made by the school, which the VA will match –covering up to the full cost of tuition and fees.*

**Next Steps**

1. *Review findings with the EDU business in YRT Requirements meeting on 1/21*

**Further research needed**

*If there are demographics that were not included in this study or you discovered that more research should be done, make note of that here.*

*No other research is included or was discovered for this study.*

**Appendix**

[Research plan](link here)

[Conversation guide](link here)

[Interview transcripts](link here)

**Tools used for Synthesis**

Excel spreadsheet: [YRP Info Research Synthesis.xlsx](https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/sites/VREPSES/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B0AB1AB54-2910-4BF4-AFF0-84046F1AB5B2%7D&file=YRP%20Info%20Research%20Synthesis.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

**Pages and applications used**

<https://staging.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool/institution/31937132>

**Other supporting documents created**

e.g. user flows, personas, etc.

**Secondary research**

Include any secondary research you may have.

E.g. web analytics, ForeSee data, SME interviews, competitive analysis, or other relevant research studies.

No secondary research to include

**Who we talked to**

*Complete the demographic info below using information from the Perigean recruitment survey. For those items where you didn't have participants, please mark with "0". You can use "unknown" if you aren't sure if your participants had a characteristic.* [*See an example*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/find-a-va-form/initiatives/2021-post-mvp-releases/research/research-findings.md#who-we-talked-to)

**Recruitment criteria**

*If you had specific criteria that you recruited for, use this space to explain what those were along with other information you feel would be important to understanding your participants.*

We talked to **15 participants.**

Audience segment:

* Veterans: 15
* Caregivers: 0
* Family members of a Veteran: 0

Gender:

* Male: 11
* Female: 3

LGBTQ+:

* Transgender: 1
* Nonbinary, gender fluid, gender queer, Two-Spirit (Indigenous only), or another gender beyond man or woman: 0
* Gay, lesbian, or bisexual: 0

Devices used during study:

* Desktop: 9
* Tablet: 0
* Smart phone: 6
* Assistive Technology: 0

Age:

* 25-34: IIII (4)
* 35-44: IIIIIIII (8)
* 45-54: III (3)
* 55-64: 0
* 65+: 0
* Unknown: N/A

Education:

* High school degree or equivalent: IIII (4)
* Some college (no degree): III (3)
* Associate's degree, trade certificate or vocational training: III (3)
* Bachelor's degree: III (3)
* Master's degree: II (2)
* Doctorate degree: 0
* Unknown: N/A

Geographic location:

* Urban: 6
* Rural: 9
* Unknown: N/A

Race:

* White: IIIIIIII (8)
* Black: I (1)
* Hispanic: III (3)
* Biracial: x
* Asian: I (1)
* Native: 0
* Unknown: II (2)

Disability and Assistive Technology (AT):

* Cognitive: 0
* AT beginner: 0
* AT advanced user: 0
* Desktop screen reader: 0
* Mobile screen reader: 0
* Magnification/Zoom: 0
* [Speech Input Technology](https://www.w3.org/WAI/perspective-videos/voice/) like Siri/Dragon Naturally Speaking: 0
* Hearing aids: 0
* Sighted keyboard: 0
* Captions: 0

**Underserved groups we haven’t talked to**

[*Complete the VA recruitment checker for marginalized Veteran groups*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pq7TSHZonfpzAQBJj6B2geGHlNUwZEs4DzEvxcRgu0o/edit#gid=1221033726)

This research does not include the perspectives of the following marginalized Veteran groups: *List all groups in red from the spreadsheet*

* Group 1
* Group 2
* Group 3

*[insert screenshot of completed recruitment checker]* ![VA-recruitment-checker](link - add image to github folder and link here with .png)