**Conversation Guide: VA.gov Home Page Redesign Usability Testing**

*Start recording to the cloud.*

* **I have started recording**. I'd like to confirm: Are you comfortable if I record my screen and the audio as we talk today? Yeah, that is fine.

**Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes**

Let’s start with a few questions...

1. What kind of device are you using today? *(Computer / Tablet / Smartphone)*
2. I will be sharing a web page link with you during the session. How would you prefer to receive the URL? I could dictate it to you, or put it in the Zoom chat. *NOTE how to share URL: dictate / Zoom chat*
3. *(If using assistive technology:)* How would you rate your level of experience with using [specific assistive technology, such as a screen reader]--beginner, intermediate, advanced, or expert?
4. *(If using assistive technology:)* How long have you been using [specific assistive technology]?
5. What VA benefits, if any, do you have experience with? *RECORD: health care / education / career services / disability / housing loans / pension / life insurance / burial benefits / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
6. What VA benefits that you *don't* have experience with might you be interested in exploring? *RECORD: health care / education / career services / disability / housing loans / pension / life insurance / burial benefits / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I am not exactly what else I would be qualified for.*
7. Where do you typically go to get information and benefits from the VA? *(Google / Facebook / MHV / eBenefits / Contact center call or email / VA.gov / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) VA CWS News email 1-2 a week, American Legion emails, VA emails, and whatever else is in the news.*
8. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits? It was actually yesterday I was trying to make an appointment through MHV to send a secure message. I am still waiting for a reply.
9. Are you a Veteran’s caregiver as well? No.

**User Tasks**

Now I'm going to ask you to do a number of things that you may or may not have done before. For each task, I will stop you at a point when I feel like we've done enough, and I won't ask you to sign in.

### RECORD FOR EACH TASK...

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Goes to drop-down menu, education and training, eligibility, and start reading the page to see which one was for me at that point. Maybe even go to apply for benefits. I would first read if I even qualified, I would even call, or chat to get that answer.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### I would give it a 5 because it is a good starting point to get you in the right direction.

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Scrolls page. Goes back to VA drop-down box, education, and training, and decides not to use that section. That is a good question. I kind of don’t know where I would go. Maybe try how to apply. Reads page. Possibly go to change school. Maybe that would give me more options. More resources and click on choose a school. I would then really look at this to see where I could go. At this part I would continue going forward or go to contact us and hopefully get a chat. I am sure there is a quicker way, but I do not go on this page enough, so I don’t know it.

#### Is there anything on this page that would help you decide which school to go to? Under choosing a school I am sure under one of those three I would find something.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### For me it would be a 3 because I don’t go into the education part. It is not difficult, but it is not easy at the same time.

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### I would go to VA healthcare, go to disability, and how to file a claim. Reads page. How do I file a claim, hit the green button, and then go from there.

#### Is this a way you did it initially? The first time I went to a VA rep, and they helped me start it. When I wanted to increase it later on, I went through this process and hit the green button.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### 5 because I do it anyways. Even if I didn’t have knowledge the headings take you directly to where you want to go.

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### VA healthcare, disability, scrolls through the box, and decides to scroll the page. That is a good question that I don’t know what the rates are. You would probably have to go to check your claim and appeal status. It may allow you to. No, it wouldn’t.

#### [Not to find the amount you are getting, just the rates offered by the VA.] Yeah that is what I was trying to find. Goes and looks under pension. Scrolls page again. Veteran pension rates under more resources. Here you will find examples. I think I passed it.

#### What does pension mean to you? The amount you get per month. That is what I consider pension. They have the past year so I would assume they would have to have 2022. I just don’t see the table for 2022 even though it has information on it. I just don’t see. There is a lot of information on 2022. It looks like a lot of examples.

#### Goes back to the homepage as directed by Cindy. Scrolls and reads the page. Clicks on pension. Scrolls and reads pension page. Clicks on Find your VA pension management center under more resources. That does not work. I really don’t know if there is a table of your disability percentage, I don’t see it. I just don’t see it waving. I am struggling.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Drop down menu, education, and training, go to about GI benefits, scrolls the page and clicks on education rates, and goes back a page. I could use some assistance with this one.

#### Let’s go back a page and see if there is anything you can find that may help you. Without anything opened you can go to VA education and training benefits as a quick tab, manage your Veteran education, and if you had the GI Bill, you could go there. In my case I may need to restore mine.

#### It says apply to restore you GI Bill, I would go there first. If I had the other ones, I would go to the links I saw prior to this page. I would click on check your education benefits and then I would sign in to get more information regarding me. I would get a more detailed section about what I need to do. All these tabs on the left would be the same thing.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### For me it would be the 3 because I was in the general area before, but when I went back, I got to where I need to go. It just takes a little bit of time of going back and forth before I get to what I am looking for.

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Find a VA location, type in my city, pick health, all VA health services, and then click search. It would show me all VA clinics within 50 miles. Then you would get on this page, and you click on register for care. Then scroll down and you can apply online, by phone, or by mail. You can apply right here and start that process. You would have to do all this information here and go from there.

#### When you got VA healthcare did you go in through this way or a different way? My first time I went in person to do all the paperwork. The second time I did it all online.

#### Did you sign up to disability and healthcare at the same time? Yes. They set up healthcare, disability, and online services.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### For me it would be a 5 at the end it would. It is easy to get you where you need to go and have you sign in or to apply for benefits.

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

**Post-Task Interview - 10 minutes**

1. What worked *well* for you? Find the VA location work well, VA healthcare drop-down menu worked well. You are in the right country you just need to find the right state.
2. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? The education and training, not knowing exactly where to go. The same with looking for the compensation rate table. You could find it but it takes you time.
3. What would you like to *change or add*? I would love to add an option to see if you can go to the chat portion, they do have but you don’t talk to a person. I think you could chat with a real person. They can take you so far before they would give you contact information to who would be able to help you further. Talking to a real person through chat is much better.
4. Is that something you have used on other websites? Yes, I use it on my phone with Verizon. Instead of sending a secure message you could send a message to the nurse’s station, and you would be able to message back and forth.
5. I'd like to ask you about a specific part of the first page that you looked at: the dark blue section on Veteran homelessness.
   1. What are your thoughts on what you see here in this section of the page? If you go to compare to size, it is slightly smaller to access and manage your VA benefits. I think that would be reversed. There could be some Veterans going through some crap that need to see this. Maybe the search should be in the in the third section. Put it in the order of importance and that should be higher up and bigger this way if the Veteran is going through something it is the first thing they see. I think the updates on Veteran homelessness should do something more to bring attention to this section.
   2. What kind of information would be helpful to show here? Something on there about if you are going through homelessness. A crisis number. I see the crisis number up here but that is so small. That should be much bigger. I understand it is in red, but it should be a heck of a lot bigger. It allows them to know they have someone to talk to. It looks likes updates on Veteran homelessness is more important than talking to the crisis line, and that everything else is more important than both.
   3. Is there anything on this site you find it harder to see? No because I have a zoom feature on my screen. I know that some of my older Veteran friends don’t know you can click on the zoom feature. If it could be bigger that would be great depending on the Veteran themselves.
   4. How often should the information be changed?
6. Now I'd like to ask about another part of the page: under "Search VA.gov" where it says "Other search tools". What does that mean to you? I think this is the one stop, the quick things you are looking for. This could be the top 4 questions people ask on the website. Most common searches on this website. This is the 4 main ones people come on here for.
7. Looking up a bit on the page, tell me about what you see in the bright blue box ("Access and manage your VA benefits and health care", "Sign in and create an account").
8. I'd like to know more about how you usually look for information on web pages in general--not specifically VA or government websites. Can you tell me about a web page that you went to recently and how you found what you were looking for on it? I am part of a fishing page. You go fishing, take a picture of what you have caught, and I search on the type, kayak division, and what prizes they won during that time.
   1. RECORD: type into search box / click on links (browse) / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ You can do both. There is a section where they put important first, leaderboards, and then a search bar. It depends on the day I am on the page. Sometimes I save it to my favorites so I can go directly to that the next time.
   2. Back on the website there is a
   3. Do you ever use a search box on the page?
   4. If so, when?
9. Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know?

**Thank You and Closing - 1 minute**

Well we really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Your feedback is so helpful to us as we continue to learn about Veterans so we can improve the online tools that we provide.

If you know any other Veterans, caregivers, or service members who might be willing to participate in a future research session like this one, you can pass along the email blurb that you'll receive from our team.

Thank you so much again, and I hope that you enjoy the rest of your day!