# Conversation Guide: VA.gov Home Page Redesign ROUND 2 Usability Testing

## Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes

Let’s start with a few questions...

1. What kind of device are you using today? *(Computer / Tablet / Smartphone)iPhone*
2. *Veteran, also a family member, and caregiver: Yes*
3. *Also a service member: yes*. I am a veteran, and a reservist. My husband is a veteran and my father is a veteran that I am a caregiver for.
4. *Help with his needs*: yes I do
5. 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*
6. What VA benefits, if any, do you have experience with? *RECORD: health care / education / career services / disability / housing loans / pension / life insurance / burial benefits / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_No other services. Husband has not filed for disability; my father has and is considers 80 percent. I have not, my fault but I am still serving so it is on the to do list.*
7. *Experience with disability: with the va health benefits yes I am, I am also a commander so I have used resources for my soldiers who are separating or retiring.*
8. How do you typically get information and benefits from the VA? *(Google / Facebook / MHV / eBenefits / Contact center call or email / VA.gov / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) family programs as well, so we would have links to resources and the networking. I have had papers all over so I make my own directory. There are links in MHV that you can use to get other resources but I google as well.*
9. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits? Um it has been sometime besides going to the health care side we have not sought other benefits.
10. Recently for healthcare: appointments, prescriptions.
11. Which site: myhealthevet

## 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.

*(if a task is taking too long, could say "Let's try a different task...")*

### IF/WHEN participant wants to sign in before doing a task...

* How would you do that? *(RECORD: "Sign in" button in header / "Create account" button below header /*
  + *"Sign in or create an account" button on a content page > Sign in or Create account link / My VA button )*
* *(If "Create account" button)...*
  + What are your impressions of what you see?
  + Is this what you expected? *(RECORD: Yes / No / Confusion / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
  + What would you do next? *(RECORD: colored sign-in button / Create an account link below / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
* *(If not currently on the home page)* Could you please go back to the original page you were on? How might you do that from here?
* Do you have an account? *(Yes / No / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
  + *(if No)* What do you think about **whether** you **need** an account?
  + Why or why not?
  + *(Given whether they already have an account, did they use the appropriate button/link to sign in vs. create an account? Yes / No )*
* If you were on a public computer and didn't want to sign in, is there anything you could do from this web page?

### Task 1: [Message your doctor or get a health care message] - Ideally IF *HAVE* VA HEALTH CARE

Let's pretend that you had a doctor's appointment at the VA last week, and now you have a follow up question for the doctor. How could you contact them? Uh, press sign in. Just sign in, I assume I have an account so the only think I could do is sign in.

Anywhere else: I don’t see anywhere I would guess va healthcare. This explains the page. Let’s see if it’s under programs and services. I guess I don’t easily see it.

Anything jump out where you might be able to contact them: no this explains more of the generic page about the website. There’s a healthcare here but it says apply for healthcare or manage prescriptions. You’d still need to create an account. It tells me I contract healthcare. I would still need to sign in. I don’t see where I would be able to contact the doctor. It doesn’t jump out at me.

* How would you rate the ease of finding what you were looking for on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is *difficult* and 5 is *easy*? And why? I would rate 1 because I never found it. without signing in I wouldn’t know.

### Task 2: [Show that you're a Veteran (with benefit letter or Veteran ID card)]

Suppose you need to show that you're a Veteran for a special discount at a store. From this web page, how might you request proof of your status as a Veteran? From this front page. Without clicking another button. Um. Using the homepage nothing talks about showing proof of service. Without signing in it does not pop up to me until I use search. It leads me to a search that goes to another website.

Anything there that could help: it says health records. I could go to records. Clicked records. Then you can go in and get your records. So I would click on records and it goes to other links. (reading page) maybe get veteran ID card but that’s an actual card so there's nothing that would show, it shows me how to get in on the drivers license but for showing proof I don’t see an easy accessibility without diving to find it. I assume it needs to be immediate at the store.

* How would you rate the ease of finding what you were looking for on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is *difficult* and 5 is *easy*? And why? Um if it were for the purpose immediately it is difficult but for planning purposes it is about a 4. I know for an ID card you need to apply for it so I know where to apply for it.

### Task 3: [Find a mental health counselor or therapist]

Pretend that you've been going through some challenges in your life recently, and you want to talk to someone about how you're feeling. How would you do that? Go to contact us. This contact us seems like it is generic phone numbers. Maybe under programs. Mental health. Am I looking for a phone number. Oh I guess if I was looking on here to talk to someone, I would expect there to be something I don’t need to dig and dive for.

What you see isn’t as helpful as you want: it is informative but accessibility to contact someone isn’t there. Want to pickup and call now or a chat. I expect that to be under contact us in the beginning but I have to search how to contact you.

Want it to be clear: yes because you have all of the hotline information but no help hotline for mental health.

Mental link at the bottom but not a link to get in contact right away: not at easy it talks about where to go for treatment, learn about, it looks more information which is good, but if I need to contact them right away, I don’t see it.

* How would you rate the ease of finding what you were looking for on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is *difficult* and 5 is *easy*? And why? 1 because I didn’t find it.

### Task 4: [Updates in VA benefits (VA promo)]

From this web page, how could you learn about recent changes that may affect benefits and services offered by the VA? this top portion here if It were a rolling screen of changes that you could click on that would be an eye opener. Like a teaser so you would click on it to learn more. Otherwise I would need to intentionally go in and look for recent changes and there’s nothing here besides press releases and emails. It tells me how to find other sources to get updates but not updates. This would refer me to go to press releases to external links. Highlighting what is new is nice and the date on there. Search engine is good. I would go to press release. That’s pretty much it.

* How would you rate the ease of finding what you were looking for on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is *difficult* and 5 is *easy*? And why? Um I would rate it a 3 because if the va wants to make sure to have people engaged and knowledge of what’s going on it should be on a forefront of the website. At the top, not at the bottom. At the bottom it is an endnote and most people don’t read those. If it is at the beginning like the tickers like click here for the recent updates and you can click on it and draws attention due to it being at the beginning
* Draws attention to recent changes: the pact act under va benefits. I assume that this is a new thing. So click here to learn benefits. I don’t know if it is the same thing that was given a year ago or new information as it is coming in. No indication as new.
* Saw new on the other page: yes and there was a date.
* Want indication: yes because if I am reading it every day I don’t want to have to go through it so what’s happened since the 18th.

Task 4A: [VA news]

* How would you know what else is new--see if there are other stories from the VA that might be relevant to you? when you go to the middle of the page go to va news. The link for the new and the dates on there. Different than expected.
* Thoughts: somewhat funny. Difference between life insurance. That’s more of information unless they have made something new regarding it. it tells me the difference, it’s not a hot topic. I don’t know why that’s a top story. post 9/11 GI bill, I don’t know why that’s a top story. I think a top story should be something that affects like LGBTQ and veteran updates. It should have a date. It looks like there’s a mix of stories.
* Needs to be new not explaining a benefit: exactly. If you want to know the difference of benefits you can go look at the benefits for that.

### Task 5: [Review or update your dependents]

Say that you just got married. How would you tell the VA about your new spouse? There is no DEERS enrollment, it’s where you enroll your spouse or dependents within the system. They use that to validate if a person is with a military member and I don’t see a connect here. Nothing that pops out immediately. Maybe family member benefits but it doesn’t have add—it’s just benefits. It is more informational. Maybe va recourse, nope. I don’t see where I can add, it’s not easy to find.

* How would you rate the ease of finding what you were looking for on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is *difficult* and 5 is *easy*? And why? 1 because I did not find it.

### Task 6: [Check the current disability compensation rates]

You'd like to see VA's current disability compensation rates. How would you find these? I do not know because I have never looked for anything like that. I would guess disability. I would go to the search engine because it is too difficult to find. Okay so that’s how I would do it is typing it in the search and it gives me a link. It’s the government benefits page not the va page. So access current rates. (reading page)

How would you rate the ease of finding what you were looking for on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is *difficult* and 5 is *easy*? And why? Um I would say 2. I didn’t find it through a link I had to sue the search engine.

If found a link it would have been easier: oh absolutely.

### Task 7: [Compare VA education benefits and rates by school]

There are several universities in your area, and you want to figure out which one to attend in order to maximize VA's coverage of your tuition and housing. How would you figure that out? I do not know. Education benefits rate. Nope. I would think it would be under education and training but the description says apply and manage education. Let’s click on it and see. here we go the GI bill comparison tool. Okay there you go.

* How would you rate the ease of finding what you were looking for on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is *difficult* and 5 is *easy*? And why? I would say 3

### Task 8: [File for a VA disability increase] - Ideally IF *HAVE* VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION

Your hearing loss from your time in the military has gotten worse over the last year and you want to try to increase your disability rating. How would you do that from the web page? Oh let’s see. I would click on disability. File and track your service. (reading page) file for increase, sign in to start your application. I would sign in than it would give me the form and ask what I am looking for, to support, increase, decrease a claim and add documents.

* How would you rate the ease of finding what you were looking for on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is *difficult* and 5 is *easy*? And why? I would say probably about a 4.

## Post-Task Interview - 10 minutes

Could you please go back to the original web page you opened?

1. What worked *well* for you? Um, I can say what I liked. I like how it has the links but I don’t think the descriptions say everything there. I would have assumed it is more informational. For education and training it says apply for Gi bill and other benefits I wouldn’t have expected that comparison tool to be there because it is about benefits. So I would think it would only talk about benefits. If there were tool and then there would be links for other benefits.
2. From the descriptions it is more information instead of task oriented: Yes
3. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? News sources. Without having to scroll to find new releases. I would assume it would be at the top but va news is in the middle.
4. What would you like to *change or add*? it is interesting that you have popular on the va.gov page, it is almost mimicking. You have education then education benefits but it’s the same link. it is a repeat but with different words.
5. Feelings: it is a waste of words and space. Not to the point. I like the icons in the picture instead of the link./ of you have an elderly veteran look at this they will be into the visual cue instead so they think healthcare is the medical box,.

## 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 web link that you'll receive in your email from our team.

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