Instructions to notetakers:

* Take as close to verbatim notes as you can, but also, don’t worry too much about. Unless notes are \*\*really bad\*\*, don’t recommend going back to clean up. This can be done as needed during analysis phase. Just try to get as much as possible during the session then take a breather until the next.
* Indicate in bold when moderator speaks.
* Give initials M for moderator and P for participant.
* Note the time of the interview
* Title the notes using the following format: 2023-12-time-P(#)-device-gender-age.md
* Indicate in (\_italics\_) when you’re describing a behavior. E.g., “umm, I think I should do this (\_clicks on sign in button\_).”

**Current VA benefits usage**

**THIS USER HAD BAD AUDIO SO SOME NOTES ARE A BIT UNCLEAR.**

**1. What kinds of devices do you use? How comfortable are you with each one?**

P - I use my laptops and I use my phone.

M - What kind of phone?

P - My iPhone and regular Dell computer. I’m comfortable with them. I try to keep things simple. Phone is more flexible b/c I’m outside a lot. I’m an outside person. Job requires me to be outside a lot.

**2. How do you currently access VA benefits and services? What do you do digitally and what do you do in person? How do you decide what to do?**

P - I use MyHealtheVet, [inaudible]. I access them with face recognition. I have to send in my DD214. Or access via website. I have other healthcare that is not VA also.

**3. What veteran IDs do you currently have? Which have you had in the past, post - service? Tell me about how you use them.**

* **What do they use when?**
* **For what?**
* **What makes them pick a specific card?**
* **How do they describe each card, its purpose and use?**

P - I’m retired so I have the retiree ID. I have a VHIC card. I’m a govt employee so I have a govt ID. My DL says veteran.

[inaudible]

M - Do you have a preference?

P - I like my phone for MyHealtheVet. It allows face recognition for logging in and remembers my password. When I log in I can go right to messaging and appointments right from my phone.

**4. Have you ever submitted for travel reimbursement from the VA?**

* **How (Online? Kiosk? Mail?)**
* **Why did they pick online/mail/kiosk?**

P - Yeah but it’s difficult. I don’t like the way they do that process. You have to do a lot of extra work for just the 10 or 20 bucks I need for reimbursement. [inaudible] I don’t go to VA unless I have to. There is the travel windows where you drop off the forms or sign. [inaudible]

**Current discount usage**

**5. What retailers or retail categories would you say you shop at regularly?**

P - Food or entertainment. Lowes and Home Depot. There are a lot of food discounts.

M - What kind of entertainment?

P - [sports?] Organizations give discounts and tickets to vets. There are a lot of us that don’t make much money. Once you let them know who you are there are a lot first come first serve options or ways to find out early.

M - What about online?

P - I’ve got three kids [inaudible] so I’m always shopping. My wife shops online for them. [inaudible - he doesn’t shop online much]

**6. Historically, how have you learned about veteran specific discount programs? Where have you learned about them?**

P - I’m part of a lot of groups so just being a part of the community you find out from each other. Also the state has programs you find out about through state vet reps. I also research and look to see if it’s going to be the same information across different resources.

M - How did you hear about sport teams discounts?

P - You hear from veteran organizations or the websites that offer entertainment tickets. [Mentioned Vet tech?] Volunteering in the community you find out from other veterans.

**7. When was the last time you successfully used a veteran specific discount at a retailer or non-VA healthcare facility?**

* **Why did you want to use it?**
* **Where were you? What was it for?**
* **How did you access the discount?**
* **Probe for:** 
  + **Did they have to validate?**
  + **Who was validating their status?**
  + **Did that person say what they were looking for?**
  + **What did they use to validate?**
* **Did you plan to use the discount before you went shopping?**

P - Everyday. Every time I go to a store I ask. If they say no the I probably will never go there again. I don’t shop much but my wife has an ID also since she’s my dependent. She does more. But I usually just go to HD or Lowes and a few stores that I already know about their discounts. There are certain BBQ places around that give 10%. Other places only do it on veterans day. Some breweries and sports bars will give discounts.

M - Which BBQ place? Last time?

P - Last month. They promoted the discount. Vets know vets and if they actively support us word gets around.

M - So you show up and place your order how do you get the discount

P - Just go up and order and ask and tell them you are a vet and it gets calculated at the counter.

M - And who are you talking to there?

P - The person I’m ordering from. Sometimes you go through the app to order but sometimes you have to show your ID and they say Ok.

M - So you go in and go up to the counter and order - What do you show them?

P - I show them my retiree ID.

M - Do they ever talk about what they are looking for?

P - No if you have the real one it looks official and has everything they seem to need to see. MyHealtheVet is only valid until I’m 65 and then I’ll get a new ID. This one has a validation date.

M - Did you plan to use it before you get there?

P - Yes.

**8. Have you ever tried to use a veteran specific discount at a retailer but been denied??**

* **Tell me about this experience.**
* **Where were you? What discount were you trying to access?**
* **Who denied the discount? (Cashier, manager, etc.)**
* **What reason were you given for the denial?**

P - Some you have to ask. If they are a big business or franchise they can decide if they do or don’t, depending on each location.

M - Any scenario where they said no?

P - Can’t think of it. It’s only if you don’t know ahead of time, and you have to ask the first time you go in. but I try to know. Some places only do it on Veterans day or memorial day, but others do it all the time. It’s a hit or miss.

**9. Have you ever wanted to use a veteran specific discount but \*\*NOT\*\* been able to do so? Any experience in line with what we have discussed that we have not covered?**

P - Not really once you find out you know. If you don’t ask, you don’t receive. It’s really about knowing the system and knowing who to ask. I always keep my passport and IDs updated. If they are rude, I’ll usually call the supervisor or go online and leave a review. I don’t like to complain but just because you don’t know your own rules doesn’t mean you have to be rude.

**Desired usage**

**10. We have talked about how you currently use and access veteran discounts, but if it were up to you, how would you like to access veteran specific discounts? Tell me how you would use and access these discounts.**

P - I like how they do it. Some people think that they can get a discount without their ID, they didn’t do their legwork. I like that some orgs make you login and verify ahead of time then it becomes easy every time after that. You get a barcode that’s official.

M - You mentioned not doing the legwork and the application process. They give you a barcode or something? What about that appeals to you?

P - It sounds legit. They are checking and verifying. There is fraud out there. If you’re not a vet they don’t say you are.

**11. Where would you expect to find these tools? Where would you like to access them? What would you call them?**

P - I think the way they have it set up, just verifying through your id is efficient enough. You can’t really fake an ID. I think the IDs with the code you scan and the apps just work well.

M - Anything you would change about it that would make it easier?

P - Unless they changed the ID so you don’t have a barcode I can’t think of anything.

**12. What would you expect to find around or associated with these tools?**

P - The apps they have. Wherever you go or the business they have social media and platforms so it’s easy to find out if they have an app or website I can check out to see if they offer something. If I’m going to spend a lot of money then it’s probably worth just logging in.

M - What would you call this tool?

P - It would be specific to the organization so I don’t know how that would work.

M - It sounds like you are looking to the retailer to brief you on what they do.

P - The retailer doesn’t always provide info. The state has ways of communicating who provides discounts and collaborates to help vets find out.

**Time permitting**

**13. Do you have the VA Health and Benefits mobile app?**

* **If yes: When did you notice it? Have you used it? What has your experience been with it been like?**

P - Yes. But logged in a couple times to see what it’s like. I have all of them but don’t find them all useful or don’t have a need.

M - Can you pull it up?

P - (works for a bit to find it) You want me to sign in to it?

M - Yeah if you can.

P - (can’t get his password to work on the spot)

M - It’s okay never mind.

**14. Anything else you would like to share about your experience accessing veteran specific discounts that we have not covered?**

P - Some of us don’t see the point in going after discounts. It’s more of a habit when I’m seeking them if I really need it. I usually ask in a conversational way “Hey I see your pictures on the wall it looks like you support veterans. Do you have discounts?”

**Other observations**