# Conversation Guide: Veteran Top Tasks MODERATED Interviews

## Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes

Let’s start with a few questions...

* I will be sharing a web page link with you during the session. How would you prefer to receive the URL? Send it through a Zoom message and I can click on it.
  + I could dictate it to you or put it in the Zoom chat. *NOTE how to share URL: dictate / Zoom chat*
* What kind of device are you using today? *(Computer / Tablet / Smartphone)*
* *(If using assistive technology:)*
  + How would you rate your level of experience with using a screen reader--beginner, intermediate, advanced, or expert?
  + How long have you been using a screen reader?
* Are you currently involved with the VA? If so, how? That is a yes and no question. I am the Chief Admin for Together We Served, Brian reached out to individuals about participating in studies. I told him that I was a Chief Admin with many hats that I deal with, one with dealing with the VA. Navy page created a whole new VA section with how to deal and navigate the VA. They are able to ask questions, and I deal with some of these people because they send me personal emails. In that sense I deal with the VA.
* How often do you do work in that role? Everyday.
* Outside Chief Admin, do you deal with the VA? No.
  + *(If yes:)* What kinds of VA-related activities do you do?
    - Can you tell me about some specific activities that you have done? *(RECORD tasks)*

| **VA-related activity or description** | **Last time did it** |
| --- | --- |
| *RECORD HERE...* |  |
| *. Medical Care* | When first being discharged from the military. |
| *.VA education benefits* | Until August 1970 |
| *. VA loan* | 1976 -1981 |
| *.* |  |
| *.* |  |
| *.* |  |

* *(For each task mentioned:)* When was the last time that you did that? *(RECORD in table above)*
* Are there any VA benefits that you haven't used before but that you're interested in exploring? If I could use anything I would say glasses. I am not sure if my wife could use it.
* Are you not currently using VA healthcare? No.
* You are familiar with the VA system to help other Veterans within Together We Serve? Yes, I have numerous resources to help and assist the Veterans. We use both VA websites as well as outside resources.
  + *RECORD: health care / education / career services / disability / housing loans / pension / life insurance / burial benefits / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

## Screen sharing

I have a survey that I'd like you to do while sharing your screen with me over Zoom.

While you're doing this survey, I would like you to *talk aloud* as much as possible so that you share what you're thinking, what you're doing, and what you're unsure about.

I'll have you start from a URL that I'm going to *[dictate/put into the Zoom chat]* for you to click on **bit.ly/3MswsXQ**

* *(If asked, reassure that this is a legitimate link to what I want you to test.)*

Do you see the link? I see the message in the chat from Cindy.

I would like you to share your screen with me--a web browser please. You might want to close any apps that you don’t want me to see.

* *(refer to Screen sharing instructions above, if needed)*

## Do the survey

I'd like you to do this survey and talk with me about it as you do it. I especially want to hear about anything that seems confusing or unclear to you. For code, enter P#.

* *RECORD survey start time: 1:49pm*
* *(If participant is on a phone and Zoom is in the way of the survey:)* You can drag the Zoom camera box off the screen to the side.
* *RECORD all feedback on survey--everything the participant says about the instructions or questions, but NOT their survey responses because those will be automatically saved online*

#### How do you typically interact with the VA? Check all that apply. None of the above

* *RECORD feedback on this question*

#### Please check the VA-related tasks that are most important to YOU personally right now, no matter how you do them (in person, on the phone, or online).

* *RECORD feedback on this question*

*This would be if I am trying to work directly with VA?*

| **Task** | **Participant Comments (NOT whether they checked the box because that will be saved online)** |
| --- | --- |
| Learn about or file for disability compensation | I do this all the time with other Veterans trying to get their claim starting. I provide links for them to work on that within the VA system. |
| Check the current disability compensation rates | There is no way, that I know of, to do this. |
| Upload evidence to support disability claim | Only because again, I am giving individuals the links to do this. |
| Check your claim or appeal status | I can’t do this. |
| Request a decision review (appeal) on a claim | I do know there are links to this, but I have never provided it to anyone. |
| File for a VA disability increase | Again, that is a link I could provide someone. |
| View my disability rating | No, I don’t do that. |
| Learn about or apply for education benefits | Yup, we do this for them. |
| Compare VA education benefits and rates by school | We don’t do that. |
| Check or update your current education benefits | We don’t do that; the person would have to do that themselves. |
| Verify your monthly school enrollment | I have done this, and I know this has to be done by the individual. I wouldn’t do that for someone else. |
| View your payment history | We do not do that. |
| Pay your VA copay bill or other VA debt | We may have links for this, but I have not done that. |
| Get help with your VA debt | Don’t do that |
| Review or update direct deposit | No |
| Learn about or apply for VA health care | Yes we do that. Links I have help people with that. |
| Update your VA health care information | That is up to the Veteran. |
| Check your lab or test results | No. |
| Message my doctor or get a health care message | No. |
| Refill or track a prescription | No. |
| Schedule or manage health appointments | I think we do have links for that, but I have not had to use them. |
| Find a mental health counselor or therapist | We do have mental health therapists. We do have links to help Veterans on our site. They can actually submit their questions directly to the VA provider. |
| Learn about or order hearing aid batteries | No. |
| Get your VA medical records | I think this is on our site. |
| Learn about or file for travel reimbursement | I have not seen anything like that. |
| Apply for a home loan Certificate of Eligibility (COE) | Again, that may be on the VA site, but on the top of my head I don’t remember seeing that. |
| Get help with your housing, rent, or utilities | Same with this. I have not been asked this question. It is important, yes, but that question has not be accessed in about 6 months. |
| Update my contact information with VA | We have links for that, but no one has asked me about it. |
| Review or update your dependents | No. |
| Learn about or apply for a Veteran ID card | Yes, we do this. We have a direct link. |
| Get your VA benefit letters | No. |
| Request your military records (DD214) | Many requests for the DD214. We also provide a link for their full military records. We also have many links we can provide. |
| Find a hospital, clinic, pharmacy, or Vet Center | We have a link. |
| Find a VA form | We have a link. |
| Apply for the VA caregiver assistance program | I don’t know if we have a link, but the VA page does have a link. |
| Find Veterans events near me | Yes. |
| Get help with your VA claim/application from a VSO or an accredited representative | I was trying to get links, but I don’t think we do that. |
| Learn about job and training support available from VA | Yes, we do have a link for that. |
| Learn about or apply for a Veterans Pension | We have a link that will direct the Veteran directly to that. |
| Learn about or apply for life insurance | We have some companies on our site that are insurance companies. |
| Learn if eligible for burial in a VA cemetery (pre-need determination) | Yes, we do have that one definitely. I have given that link out before. |

#### Are there any VA-related tasks that are important to YOU right now that you didn't see in the previous list? Various Veteran requests for Agent Orange (AO) or illnesses related to AO.

You get a lot of requests about that? Most definitely. Another one that is related to AO, are people who have come down with Parkinson’s.

* *RECORD feedback on this question, and anything the participant says but doesn't type into the survey*

#### What VA-related tasks do YOU do most frequently? Distribute or give links to Veterans for VA connections.

* *RECORD feedback on this question, and anything the participant says but doesn't type into the survey*

#### What VA benefits (if any) do you have experience with? Check all that apply.

* *RECORD feedback on this question, and anything the participant says but doesn't type into the survey*

| **Option** | **Participant Comments (NOT whether they checked the box because that will be saved online)** |
| --- | --- |
| Health care (including clinic appointments, prescription refills, messaging) | *I have had healthcare.* |
| Education (including GI Bill, Yellow Ribbon) | I have had including my G.I. |
| Career services (including Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment, small business certification) | They gave me, when I was first in the VA system, I did have to go through Vocational Rehab. It had nothing to do with small business certification. It was a one-day meeting with a representative. It was a quick survey. I did not get a positive feeling towards the representative. Maybe an hour. |
| Disability (including claims and appeals) | I have done this. |
| Housing (including adaptive housing, home loans, homelessness services) | Yes, I have done that. |
| Pension |  |
| Life insurance | No life insurance through them. |
| Burial benefits or memorial items | I have looked into burial, so I have a lot of knowledge on that. |

* *RECORD survey end time: 2:10pm*

## Post-Task Interview - 5 minutes

*Type into #feedback-backchannel: "Any questions you want me to ask?"*

I'm interested in hearing your thoughts on the survey you just did.

* What did you *like* about the survey? They covered a lot of items of the VA that I would think a lot of people would like to gain access to. I think the one thing I would add in there would be adding on illnesses. Maybe it is because I have more dealings with individuals who have Agent Orange, and it is an ongoing issue.
* You think we would need to expand on the disability box? Yes, maybe if you click on it and it would dropdown and they would be able to explain their issues.
* You mentioned Agent Orange, would you think there would be others we should ask? Maybe do it off the time frame of service. You may want to just put in the option to list the information they may want to explain further. Have individual list their concerns. Maybe something like that would be nice to have so you could fine tune your research. Places where I stopped and asked that is somewhere you should look. It is not just Agent Orange—also oil burning, and Gulf War Syndrome.
* What kind of questions do you get asked? It depends on the point of dealing with the VA. If they are first starting off, they may have questions about how to start and what kind of illnesses are related. Others who are further along in the process may be asking how to get their issues covered by the VA because it is related to their service. Those are some of the questions. People are claiming that they have breathing issues and the VA does not recognize those issues, or just trying to prove yourself. The VA makes them jump through hoops.
* What did you *dislike* about the survey?
* What would you like to *change* about the survey?
* Was there anything that you found to be *difficult or confusing*?
* Do you have any other feedback for if you were doing the survey by yourself (without having me here in this session)?
* 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.

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