NEWDAY REAL ESTATE SOLUTIONS

Veterans Home Buying Guide

A step-by-step path to home ownership



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

What you need to know

This guide shows you what to do, when to do it, and how your veteran status gives you real advantages when you buy a home, especially through the VA loan program.

- VA loans are backed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- No down payment is required in most cases.
- There is no monthly mortgage insurance.
- VA sets no minimum credit score, though your lender may set its own.
- Rates can compare well with other loans.

> **Your advantage:** as a veteran, you are entitled to some of the best loan terms available. Over the life of a loan, that can add up to a lot.

Loan information in this guide is general education and not a promise of financing. Your lender confirms what applies to you.

STEP 1

Check your VA loan eligibility

Confirm your service meets VA loan criteria

Eligibility depends on when and how you served. You may qualify with:

- 90 continuous days of active duty
- At least 181 days of qualifying service during certain service periods
- Six creditable years in the National Guard or Selected Reserve
- Shorter service, if you were discharged for a service-connected disability or another approved exception

Some surviving spouses of veterans may qualify, too. Visit VA.gov or ask your lender to pull your Certificate of Eligibility (COE). It confirms your eligibility, and you need it to use the benefit.

What is a VA loan?

A VA loan is a mortgage guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Why it is so powerful

- **No down payment** in most cases.
- **No monthly mortgage insurance.**
- **Competitive rates.** They can compare well with conventional loans.
- **Flexible credit guidelines.** Past credit challenges do not automatically disqualify you.
- **No VA loan limit with full entitlement.** Your income and your lender set what you can buy.
- **A one-time funding fee.** It can be rolled into the loan. Some veterans and surviving spouses are exempt.

STEPS 2 AND 3

Choose your lender, then get pre-approved

Step 2: choose a VA-savvy lender

You want a lender who specializes in VA loans, not just one who can do them. Ask:

- “How many VA loans have you closed this year?”
- “Do you have a dedicated VA underwriting team?”

A lender who knows VA guidelines can get you approved faster and avoid hiccups at closing. I can introduce you to lenders who know VA loans.

Step 3: get pre-approved

Pre-approval tells sellers you are serious and shows you what you can afford. You will provide:

- Proof of service (DD-214 or a statement of service)
- Income verification (W-2s, LES, tax returns)
- A credit check

> **Why it can be easier for veterans:** VA guidelines can be more flexible on debt-to-income and credit, and your lender may count housing allowances like BAH. Your lender will tell you how it applies to you.

STEPS 4 AND 5

Find the right agent, then the right home

Step 4: work with an agent who understands VA buyers

Ask any agent you are considering:

- “Do you know what VA Minimum Property Requirements are?”
- “How have you helped other VA buyers succeed?”

VA loans have property condition guidelines. A VA-savvy agent helps you avoid homes that will not qualify and negotiate VA-specific terms, like seller-paid closing costs.

Step 5: house hunt with confidence

- The home must be your primary residence. No investment or vacation homes.
- A condo must be VA-approved.
- The home must meet VA Minimum Property Requirements: safe, structurally sound and sanitary, with no major roof, plumbing or electrical problems.

VA also allows manufactured homes, and multi-family homes of up to 4 units if you live in one unit. If a home needs repairs, ask your lender whether repair financing is available.

STEP 6

Make an offer and get the most from your benefit

What to include

- **A VA loan contingency.** It protects your earnest money if the home does not appraise.
- **Seller-paid costs.** The seller can pay some or all of your closing costs, so you may bring little or no cash to closing.

How seller help works

Normal closing costs the seller pays do not count against VA's limit on seller concessions. A separate limit of 4% of the home's value applies to certain other items, such as prepaids (property tax and insurance), points above the normal amount, and paying off your debts or judgments. Your lender confirms what counts.

> **What I would do:** tell your lender your goal early, then write the offer around it, so the seller's help fits within VA's rules.

STEP 7

VA appraisal and inspection

The appraisal is required by VA

- It confirms the home's value.
- It checks the home's safety and habitability.

An inspection is optional, and smart

- It finds hidden problems, like foundation, mold or roof issues, that an appraiser may miss.

If the home does not pass the VA appraisal

You have options. Depending on your contract and VA rules, you can:

- Ask the seller to make repairs.
- Renegotiate the price.
- Cancel and keep your earnest money.

I will walk you through which one fits your situation.

STEPS 8 AND 9

Clear to close, then keys

Step 8: get “clear to close”

- Your lender does final approval: verifies your employment and rechecks your credit.
- You receive your Closing Disclosure, which lists your exact costs and loan terms.
- You set your closing date.

Step 9: close and get your keys

- You sign your closing documents.
- The county records the transfer.
- Once recording is confirmed and possession starts under your contract, the home is yours.

> **Ask your lender:** with no monthly mortgage insurance, how much lower is my payment? Have them show you the numbers.

STEP 10

After you move in

Keep getting value from your benefit

- **Property tax breaks.** Some places offer partial or full property tax relief for disabled veterans. Ask your county about the rules where you live.
- **Refinance later.** VA has a streamlined refinance for VA loans, called an IRRRL. Ask your lender how it could work for you.
- **Use your benefit again.** You may be able to use your VA loan more than once, under certain conditions.
- **A benefit for a future buyer.** When you sell, your buyer may be able to take over your VA loan with lender and VA approval. If your rate is low, that can be a selling point.

Programs and rules change. Your lender and VA.gov have the current details.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

We have options for you.

Call or text me. Let's talk about what you want and how your benefit gets you there.

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