Veterans Affairs Canada | Anciens Combattants Canada

Exploring perceptions, behaviours, and experiences in relation to My VAC Account 2025

Final Report

Prepared for Veterans Affairs Canada

Supplier Name: Phoenix SPI
Contract Number: CW2374798
Contract Value: $64,969.35 (including applicable taxes)
Award Date: 2024-09-19
Delivery Date: 2025-03-31
Registration Number: POR 042-24

For more information on this report, please contact Veterans Affairs Canada at: commsresearch-commsrecherce@veterans.gc.ca

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

Canada

Exploring perceptions, behaviours, and experiences in relation to My VAC Account 2025
Final Report
Prepared for Veterans Affairs Canada
Supplier name: Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc.

This public opinion research report presents the results of a non-probability online survey of 755 My VAC Account users conducted between January 14 and 24, 2025, and two virtual focus groups, also conducted with My VAC Account users. The focus groups were held in English and French on February 25, 2025.

This publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes only. Prior written permission must be obtained from Veterans Affairs Canada. For more information on this report, please contact Veterans Affairs Canada at:

vac.information.acc@canada.ca

Catalogue number: V49-9/2025E-PDF

International Standard Book Number (ISBN): 978-0-660-76672-0

Related publications (registration number: POR 042-24):

- V49-9/2025F-PDF
- ISBN 978-0-660-76673-7

Aussi offert en français sous le titre : ***Explorer les perceptions, les expériences et les comportements liés à Mon dossier ACC 2025***

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, 2025.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary **1**

Introduction **4**

Background and Objectives 4
Methodology 4
Notes to Readers 5

Detailed Findings **6**

1. Perceptions of the Registration Process 6
2. General Use of My VAC Account 11
3. Use and Perceptions of "Track your Applications" 15
4. Use and Impressions of Secure Messaging 20
5. Overall Assessments of My VAC Account 25
6. Future Directions 33
7. Comparison of Survey Results: 2017 to 2025 35

Appendix **37**

1. Technical Specifications 37
2. Profile of Research Participants 38
3. Research Instruments 41

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Registration method 6
Figure 2: Views on the ease of 2FA 7
Figure 3: Preferred Method of Receiving One-time Authentication Codes 7
Figure 4: Ease of registering for My VAC Account 8
Figure 5: Reasons the registration process was difficult 9
Figure 6: Agreement that the steps required for registration are justified 9
Figure 7: Source of awareness of My VAC Account 11
Figure 8: Frequency of using My VAC Account 12
Figure 9: Use of My VAC Account features 13
Figure 10: Usefulness of “Track your applications” 15
Figure 11: Reason(s) “Track your applications” was not helpful 16
Figure 12: Additional information for “Track your applications” 17
Figure 13: Reason(s) for not using “Track your applications” 17
Figure 14: Use of Secure Messaging in past 12 months 20
Figure 15: Frequency of Connecting with VAC Staff via Secure Messaging 21
Figure 16: Waiting time for Secure Messaging reply 21
Figure 17: Satisfaction with secure messaging system 22
Figure 18: Percentage that had difficulty using secure messaging 23
Figure 19: Suggestions for improving secure messaging 24
Figure 20: Experience accessing information on My VAC Account 25
Figure 21: Reason(s) for not finding all the information needed 26
Figure 22: Perceptions of the information in My VAC Account 27
Figure 23: Perceptions of different aspects of My VAC Account 28
Figure 24: Overall satisfaction with My VAC Account 30
Figure 25: Reason for dissatisfaction with My VAC Account 31
Figure 26: News and Notifications section 33

Executive Summary

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) commissioned Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (Phoenix SPI) to conduct quantitative and qualitative research with individuals who use the Department's secure online platform, My VAC Account.

Research Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the public opinion research (POR) was to explore the perceptions, behaviours, and experiences of people who use My VAC Account in order to assess the functionality and accessibility of the online service channel. In addition, the research was designed to collect information in support of improvements to My VAC Account, including information to help the Department measure progress since the last POR study was conducted in February 2021. Results from the quantitative and qualitative research will help guide the future of My VAC Account, allowing the Department to prioritize enhancements moving forward.

Methodology

A non-probability online survey was conducted with My VAC account users. Respondents were recruited through advertisements placed in My VAC Account and on the Department's main website and social media channels (i.e., Facebook, X, and LinkedIn). The survey averaged 13 minutes to complete. In total, 755 surveys were completed between January 14 and 24, 2025. Surveys that use convenience samples, like this one, cannot be described as statistically projectable to the target population and no estimates of sampling error can be calculated because the sample is based on those who self-selected for participation.

In addition, two virtual focus groups were conducted with My VAC Account users on February 25, 2025. The focus groups lasted two hours, and one was conducted in each official language. All focus group participants received a $125 honorarium to thank them for their time. Participants were recruited through a notice in My VAC Account and on the Department's social media. To maximize the number of My VAC Account users recruited, stakeholder mailing lists also were used to publicize the study. Like the online survey, the results from the focus groups are not statistically projectable, but they offer detailed opinions about the issues explored through this research and complement the broader survey findings.

Key Findings[1]

Half used a Sign-in Partner to register and found it easy.

Fifty-two percent of the My VAC Account users surveyed reported registering for the online service using a Sign-in Partner (46% used a GCKey). Compared to 2021, more respondents are using a Sign-in Partner than a GCKey in 2025. Most My VAC Account users who used a GCKey found the two-factor authentication process somewhat (34%) or very (41%) easy and agreed that the steps required to register for My VAC Account justify the security it provides (75%). Overall impressions of the registration process among focus group participants were positive, with people routinely characterizing it as simple and problem-free.

[1] Results are presented for the survey unless otherwise indicated.

Use of My VAC Account varies, but half the respondents use it at least weekly.

Approximately half of the surveyed My VAC Account users use their account at least weekly, including 6% who do so daily, 20% several times a week, and 28% about once a week. A majority of respondents have used My VAC Account to apply for benefits and services online (91%), track applications (88%), receive correspondence from VAC (84%), upload documents in support of their application (84%), view a summary of their benefits (83%), or communicate with VAC through secure messaging (83%).

Most found "Track your applications" at least somewhat helpful.

Among survey respondents who used "Track your applications", most (88%) found the tool at least somewhat helpful: 57% said it helped them find out the status of their application and 31% said it did so in part. Among those who did not find "Track your applications" helpful, one-third (32%) cited long wait times or inaccurate wait time estimates. When asked what could improve "Track your applications", nearly four in 10 (39%) suggested that VAC introduce a timeline or estimated time frame for each phase of the process. Two in 10 (20%) would like to have a clear understanding of where their application stands, such as a progress bar.

All focus group participants were aware of the "Track your applications" feature in My VAC Account, and most had used it to check the status of an online application. Those who used the feature regularly described it as easy to use and effective in meeting their needs. Nearly half of the participants had contacted VAC by phone and/or secure messaging for a follow-up after using "Track your applications". Reasons for doing so included wanting to understand why the process is taking longer than expected, wanting more precise information, or wanting explanations and clarification of terms or expressions, especially medical ones.

The majority were satisfied with their experience using secure messaging.

Among respondents who used secure messaging in the past 12 months, 40% waited one to two business days and 42% three to five business days for a reply. Actual wait times generally are in line with respondents' expectations. Forty-three percent expected to wait one to two business days for a reply (compared to 40% who did), while 36% expected to wait three to five business days (compared to 42% who did). In addition, almost seven in 10 (68%) were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience using secure messaging and very few (9%) experienced any difficulties.

Most are satisfied with their overall experience using My VAC Account, but there is room for improvement.

Three-quarters (75%) of surveyed My VAC Account users were satisfied overall with their experience using My VAC Account, including 34% who are very satisfied. Satisfaction levels have remained fairly stable since the 2017 baseline survey, when 71% were satisfied. In the follow-up years, satisfaction reached 75% in 2019, returned to 71% in 2021 and increased to 75% again in 2025.

When it comes to the information available through My VAC Account, two-thirds agreed that it is easy to find (65%) and understand (64%). Perceptions of the ease of finding and understanding the information have remained largely unchanged since the 2021 follow-up survey. A smaller majority (57%; up from 41% in 2021) said the information has the right amount of detail.

Respondents were least likely to agree that the information in My VAC Account includes helpful external resources—45% agreed that this is the case (down from 51% in 2021).

Turning to other aspects of My VAC Account, impressions were generally positive, though slightly lower than the 2021 follow-up survey. Eighty-two percent feel their personal information is secure in My VAC Account, 64% (down from 68% in 2021) can do the business they need with the Department through My VAC Account, and 52% (down from 58% in 2021) like the updates they have seen in My VAC Account in the past year. Survey respondents were least likely to agree that My VAC Account is visually appealing (49% down from 58% in 2021).

Among focus group participants, there was a widespread impression that My VAC Account is user-friendly and meets users' needs and expectations. Specifically, the visual design was described as intuitive and friendly; the text is easy to read; finding information and completing tasks was relatively easy; and the information available was described as clear and easy to understand. Suggested improvements to make My VAC Account more appealing or easier to use related mainly to accessing forms, with a focus on improving access, reducing the number of steps or prompts required to obtain a form, and simplifying the process of automatically opening PDF attachments, such as T4s.

Political Neutrality Statement

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Phoenix SPI that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity* of the Government of Canada and Directive on the Management of Communications. Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.

Signed:

Alethea Woods, President, Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc.

The contract value was $64,969.35 (including applicable taxes).

Introduction

Phoenix Strategic Perspectives (Phoenix SPI) was commissioned by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) to conduct quantitative and qualitative public opinion research (POR) with Veterans and other My VAC Account users.

Background and Objectives

My VAC Account is a secure, authenticated web application that allows users to access VAC services from anywhere and at any time. Through My VAC Account, Veterans and other My VAC Account users are able to conduct the majority of their business with the Department online. They can use the Benefits Navigator to learn more about VAC benefits and services relevant to them, apply online for VAC benefits and services, upload documents to support applications, track the status of applications, receive online correspondence (forms and letters), view a summary of their VAC benefits, sign up for direct deposit or change banking information, update contact information, and connect with VAC through secure messaging.

As the Department enhances its online service channel, the number of registered users of My VAC Account also continues to grow. Since the last My VAC Account POR study was completed in 2021, the number of Veterans and their families using this online platform has increased by 62%, from 117,000 to approximately 189,212 users. Improvements were also made to the platform in 2023 including a major visual redesign of the web application.

Because of the increasing number of users and the changes made to My VAC Account, it is critical that the Department collects feedback regarding users' experiences. The Department commissioned POR to explore users' perceptions, behaviours, and experiences using My VAC Account to assess the functionality and accessibility of the online service channel.

In addition, the research was designed to collect information in support of improvements to My VAC Account, including information to help the Department measure progress since the last POR study was conducted in February 2021. Results of the quantitative and qualitative research components will help guide the future of My VAC Account, allowing the Department to prioritize enhancements moving forward.

Methodology

This POR included both quantitative and qualitative components:

- **Quantitative:** A non-probability survey was conducted online with My VAC Account users. Respondents were recruited through advertisements placed in My VAC Account and on the Department's main website and social media channels. The survey averaged 13 minutes to complete. In total, 755 surveys were completed between January 14 and 24, 2025. The completion rate was 73%.
- **Qualitative:** Two virtual focus groups were conducted following the survey: one group in English and one group in French. Participants were recruited through My VAC Account as well as VAC's social media channels and a targeted stakeholder email. Participants included retired and still-serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) as well as family members of Veterans and retired RCMP. All focus group

participants received a $125 honorarium to thank them for their time. Both groups were conducted February 25, 2025.

More information on the methodology can be found in the Appendix, under Technical Specifications.

Notes to Readers

- The report is organized by theme, with the results of the online survey and virtual focus groups integrated in each section (as relevant). To help the reader clearly delineate quantitative from qualitative findings, the results of the survey are presented first, followed by the focus group findings.
- Regarding the **survey** results:
    - All results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Throughout the report, percentages may not always add to 100 due to rounding and/or multiple responses being offered by respondents.
    - The question wording, the number of respondents, and the target population is shown under each figure in the report.
    - As noted, the total number of survey respondents is 755. At times, however, the number of respondents changes in the report because questions were asked of sub-samples of the survey population. Accordingly, readers should exercise caution when interpreting results based on smaller numbers of respondents.
    - This report presents differences in survey responses by selected segments, or subgroups, of the survey sample. This includes age, region, client types and frequency of using My VAC Account. These differences are presented in a box to off-set them from the main findings. If subgroup differences are not discussed for certain questions, it can be assumed that there were no significant differences of note. Only subgroup differences that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, pertain to a subgroup sample size of more than n=20, or are part of a pattern or trend are discussed in the report.
    - Where relevant, reference is made to findings from the baseline survey conducted in 2017 as well as the 2019 and 2021 follow-ups.
    - A full set of tabulated data is available under separate cover.
- Regarding the **focus groups** results:
    - Qualitative research is designed to reveal a broad range of opinions and generate directional insights rather than to measure what percentage of the target population holds a given opinion. The results of these focus groups provide an indication of participants' views about the issues explored, but they cannot be quantified or generalized to the full population of My VAC Account users.
- The research instruments can be found in the Appendix along with more information about the technical specifications of the research.

Detailed Findings

1. Perceptions of the Registration Process

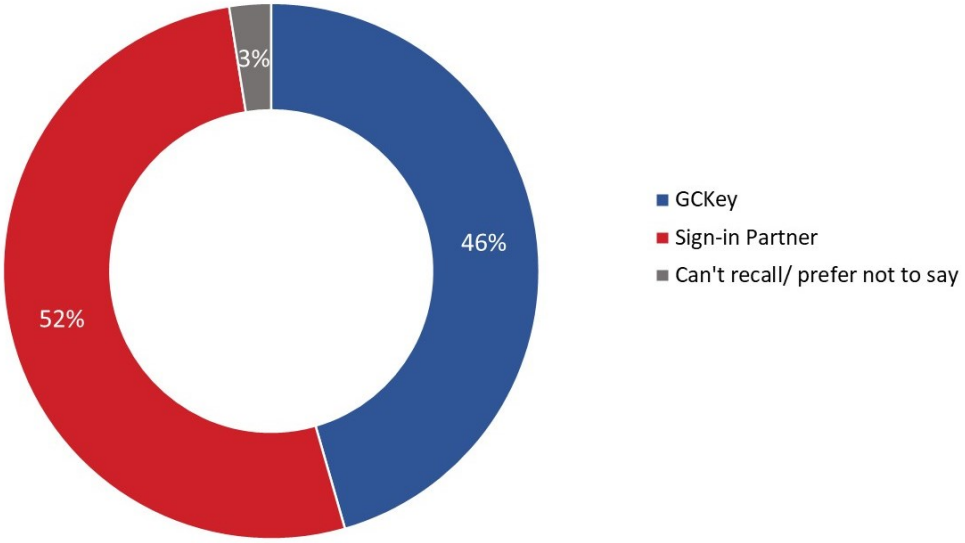
This section discusses My VAC Account users' experience with the registration process. The survey findings are presented first, followed by the focus group findings.

1.1 Survey Results

Half used a Sign-in Partner to register for My VAC Account

Fifty-two percent of those surveyed said they registered for My VAC Account using a Sign-in Partner, while 46% used a GCKey (3% could not recall how they registered for My VAC Account). Use of a Sign-in Partner to register for My VAC Account has increased since the baseline survey was conducted in 2017, from 36% to 52% in 2025.

Figure 1: Registration method



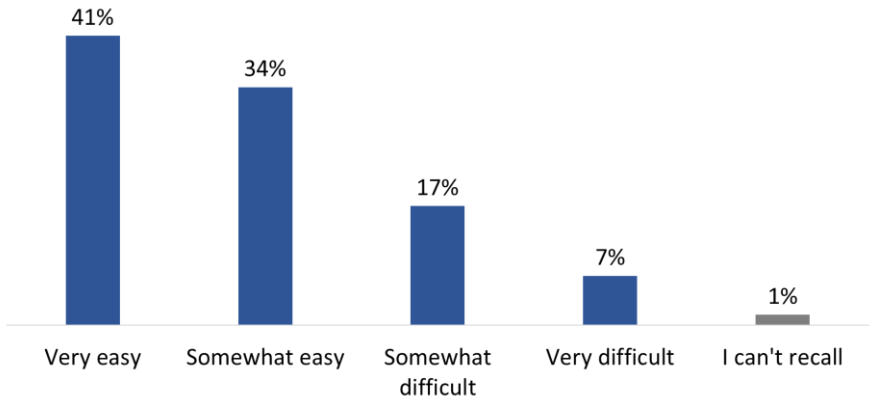
Base: n=755; all respondents
Q8. When you registered for My VAC Account, which of the following did you use?

The likelihood of registering for My VAC Account with a GCKey increased with age, from 23% of those aged 18 to 39 to 53% of those aged 60 and older. Respondents from Quebec (57%) were more likely to have registered using a GCKey than those from Ontario (37%). Additionally, retired RCMP members (55%) were more likely than serving RCMP members (28%) to have registered using a GCKey.

Most who used a GCKey to register found the two-factor authentication process easy

Among respondents who used a GCKey to register for My VAC Account (n=344), three-quarters (75%) found the two-step authentication (2FA) process at least somewhat easy. Specifically, 41% said it was very easy and 34% said it was somewhat easy. In contrast, one-quarter (24%) said the GCKey 2FA process was somewhat or very difficult.

Figure 2: Views on the ease of 2FA

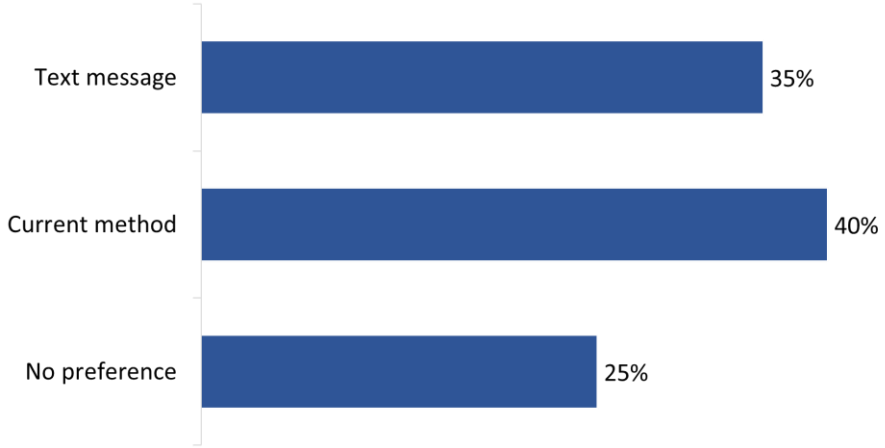


Base: n=344; respondents who registered for My VAC Account using GCKey
Q9. How easy or difficult was the GCKey two-factor authentication (2FA) process?

About one-third are interested in receiving the one-time codes via text message

Among respondents who registered for My VAC Account using a GCKey (n=344), approximately one-third (35%) said they would prefer to receive the one-time authentication codes by text message, if this was an option. The rest prefer the current two-factor login process of having the one-time authentication codes sent to them via email or an app on their phone (40%), while one-quarter have no preference.

Figure 3: Preferred Method of Receiving One-time Authentication Codes

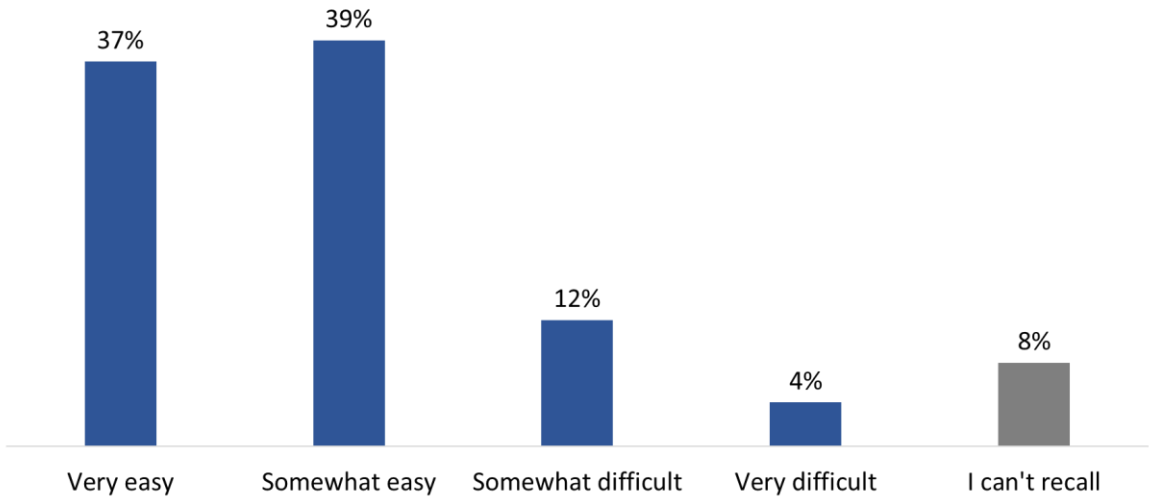


Base: n=344; respondents who registered for My VAC Account using GCKey
Q10. As part of the two-factor login process, one-time authentication codes are sent to you via email or an app on your phone. If an option to receive these codes via text message was available, would you prefer that method?

Three-quarters found it easy to register for My VAC Account

Among respondents who recalled registering for My VAC Account (n=736), three-quarters (76%) found the process at least somewhat easy. Specifically, 37% described it as very easy, while 39% found it somewhat easy. In contrast, 16% reported that registering for My VAC Account was somewhat or very difficult. Eight percent could not recall whether it was easy or difficult to register. Perceptions of the registration process have not changed since the 2021 survey when 75% found it somewhat or very easy.

Figure 4: Ease of registering for My VAC Account



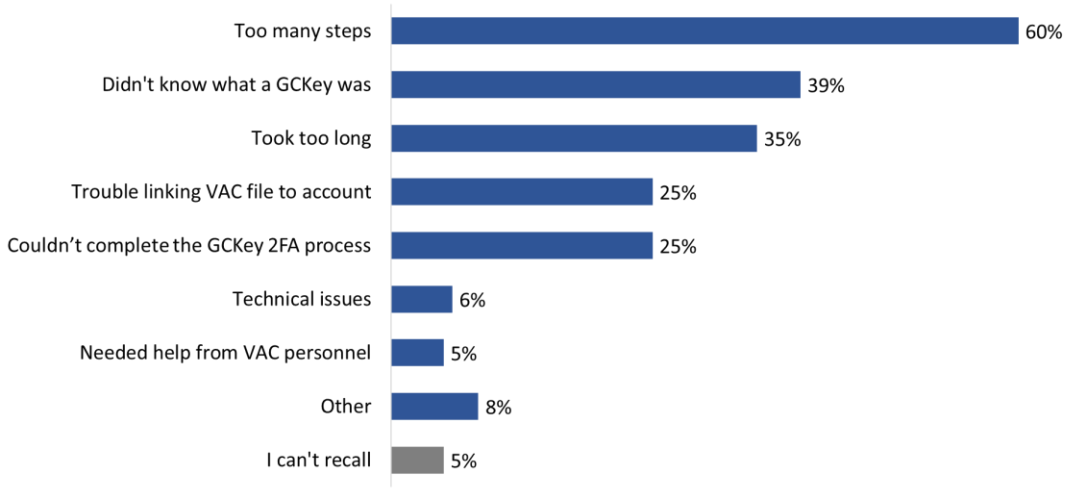
Base: n=736; respondents who recalled registering for My VAC Account
Q11. Overall, how easy or difficult was the process to register for My VAC Account?

Men were more likely than women to have found the process to register for My VAC Account very easy (39% versus. 27%). Additionally, those who use My VAC Account more than once a week (47%) were more likely to say the process was very easy compared to those who use the service once a week (33%) and less than once a month (31%).

Many say the registration process was difficult due to the number of steps

Among those who found the My VAC Account registration process difficult (n=120), 60% said the main challenge was the number of steps. Additionally, 39% said they were unfamiliar with GCKey, while 35% found the process too time-consuming. One-quarter struggled with linking their VAC file to their account or completing the GCKey 2FA process. Smaller proportions mentioned experiencing technical issues (6%) or requiring assistance from VAC personnel (5%).

Figure 5: Reasons the registration process was difficult

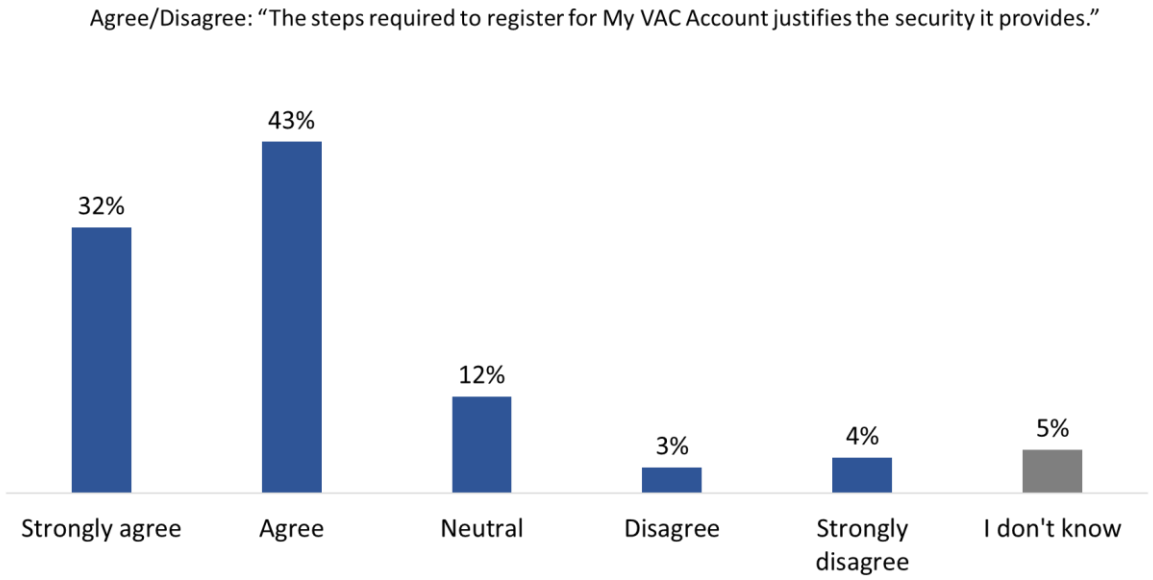


Base: n=120; respondents who recalled registering for My VAC Account and found the process difficult
Q12. Why was it difficult to register for My VAC Account? [Multiple responses accepted]

Three-quarters agree that the registration steps are justified by the security provided

Three-quarters (75%) of respondents agreed that the steps required to register for My VAC Account are justified by the security it provides, including 32% who strongly agreed. Relatively few (7%) disagreed. Overall perceptions among My VAC Account users have declined slightly since 2021, when 80% agreed that the registration steps were justified. However, this year's results align more closely with previous years—76% agreed in 2017, and 70% in 2019.

Figure 6: Agreement that the steps required for registration are justified



Base: n=755; all respondents
Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The steps required to register for My VAC Account justifies the security it provides."

1.2 Focus Group Results

Overall impressions of the registration process among focus group participants were positive, with people routinely characterizing it as simple and problem-free. Participants described the process as taking approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete, and no one identified difficulties trying to link their existing VAC information to their My VAC Account.

The only suggestion for improving the registration process was to have the option to have a case manager on hand to help guide new My VAC Account users through the process. While the registration process is perceived as easy overall, participants noted that older Veterans might need assistance if they have limited experience with computers and online technology.

2. General Use of My VAC Account

This section of the report focuses on respondents' use of My VAC Account. The survey findings are presented first, followed by the focus group findings.

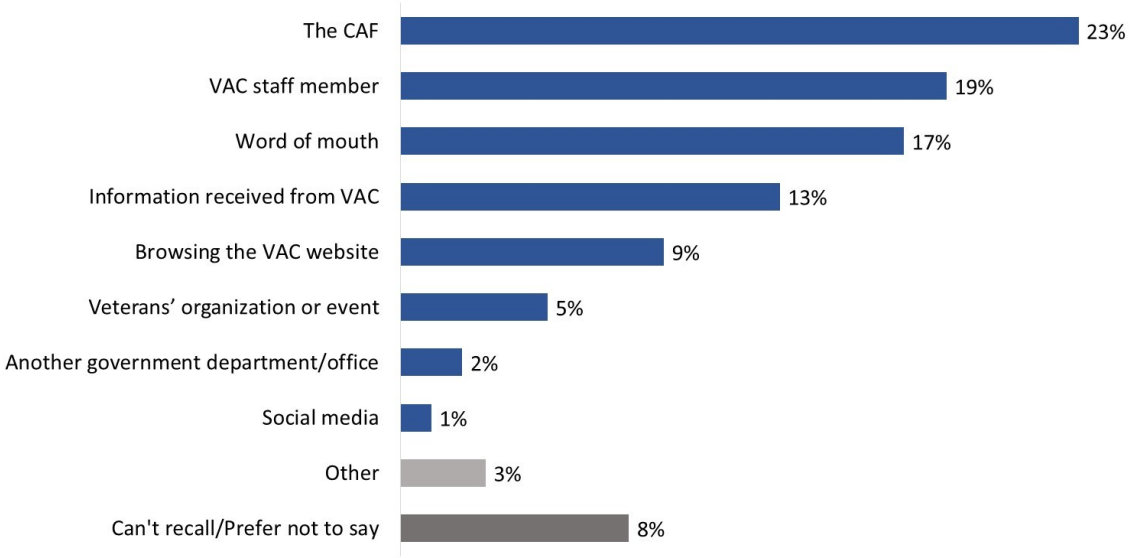
2.1 Survey Results

My VAC Account users learned of the online service through a variety of sources

Approximately one-quarter (23%) of My VAC Account users first heard about the online service from the CAF. Following this, similar proportions mentioned a VAC staff member (19%) or word of mouth, such as from a friend or colleague (17%), while 13% cited information received from VAC staff. The full list of sources is shown in Figure 7.

The CAF replaces a VAC staff member as the top source of awareness in 2025. Since the baseline survey was conducted in 2017, a VAC staff member has been the most commonly mentioned source of first learning about My VAC Account.

Figure 7: Source of awareness of My VAC Account



Base: n=755; all respondents
Q6. How did you first learn about My VAC Account?

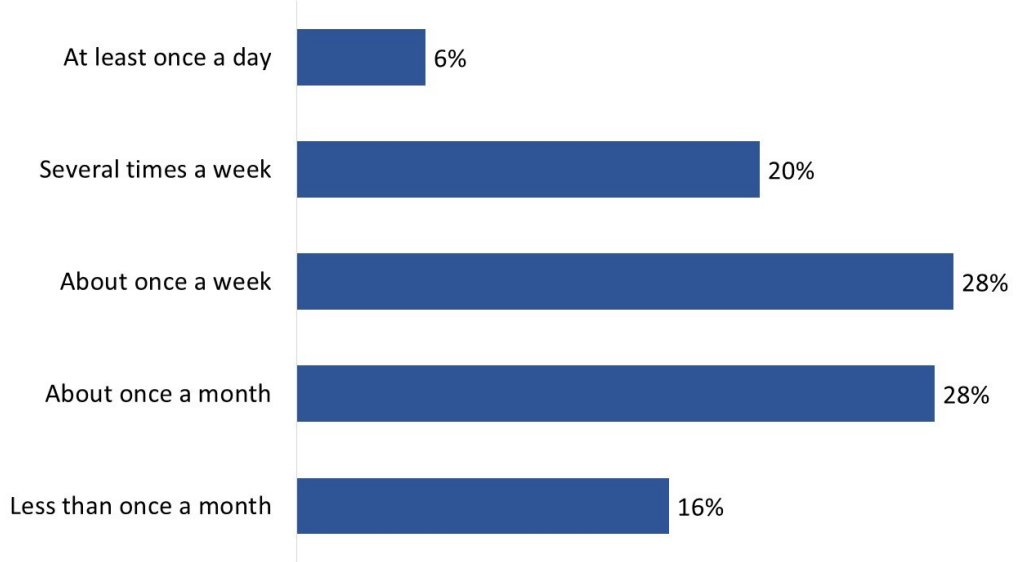
Respondents aged 18 to 39 were more likely than respondents aged 60 and older to have first heard about My VAC Account through the CAF (37% versus 16%) and by word of mouth (also 37% versus 16%).

Approximately half use My VAC Account weekly

By design, all survey respondents were registered My VAC Account users, including 98% who had used My VAC Account in the past twelve months (n=740).

When asked how frequently they use My VAC Account, almost half said they do so weekly, either several times a week (20%) or about once a week (28%). Few (6%) use their account daily. At the other end of the spectrum, 28% use My VAC Account about once a month and 16% do so less than once a month.

Figure 8: Frequency of using My VAC Account



Base: n=740; those who used My VAC Account in the last 12 months; don't know / prefer not to say: 2%.
Q3. On average, how often would you say you use My VAC Account?

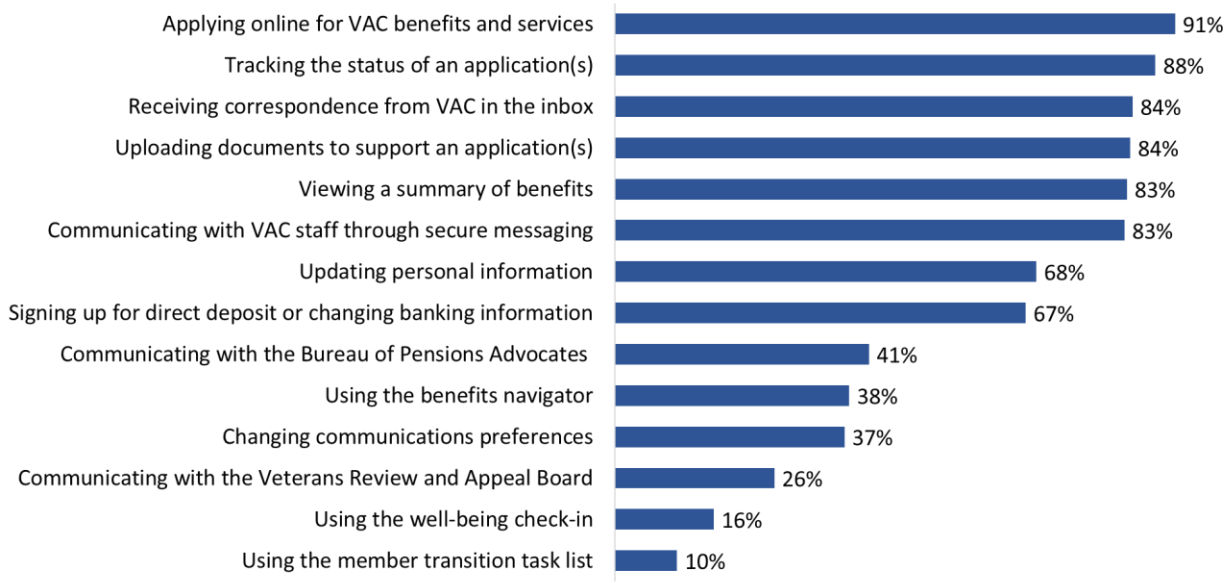
Half or more have used most My VAC Account features

Survey respondents were asked which features they have accessed in My VAC Account. Similar to 2021, the majority of My VAC Account users have used most features, with the highest usage for online applications for VAC benefits and services (91%) and tracking application status (88%). Following this, approximately eight in 10 have received correspondence from VAC in their account inbox (84%), uploaded documents to support their application (84%), viewed a summary of their benefits (83%), and communicated with VAC staff through secure messaging (83%). Additionally, two-thirds have used My VAC Account to update their personal information (68%) or sign up for direct deposit (67%).

Notably, document uploads have steadily increased from 63% in 2017 to 73% in 2019, to 79% in 2021, and 84% in 2025.

The full list of features accessed in My VAC Account can be found in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Use of My VAC Account features



Base: n=755; all respondents. [Multiple responses accepted].
Q7. Which of the following features have you accessed in My VAC Account?

Respondents who use My VAC Account more than once a week were significantly more likely to report using the following features:

- Communicating with VAC staff through secure messaging (93%)
- Uploading documents to support their application(s) (92%)
- Updating their personal information (75%)
- Communicating with the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (53%)
- Using the benefits navigator (50%)
- Changing their communications preferences (46%).

Retired CAF members (excluding war service Veterans) were significantly more likely than still-serving CAF members to have viewed a summary of their benefits (86% versus 68%) and received correspondence from the Department (86% versus 72%).

2.2 Focus Group Results

Focus group participants use My VAC Account in a variety of ways, but most often to apply for benefits, track applications, and communicate with VAC, including with a case manager. Additional uses include uploading documents, updating personal information, accessing disability payments and benefits information, tracking the deposit of benefit payments into their bank account, and staying up to date about VAC affairs and Veterans' issues, such as through the *Salute* newsletter.

The frequency with which focus group participants access My VAC Accounts varies, ranging from a few times a week to approximately once a month. Some participants mentioned that their frequency of use varies depending on circumstances, such as receiving a notification from VAC about an update (in which case, they would log in more frequently). In addition to the landing

page, which was described by some participants as important because it is the gateway to all services, the following specific features of My VAC Account were described as most important:

- Applying for benefits and services
- Tracking applications
- Uploading documents
- Tracking/confirming receipt of benefit payments
- Communications/messaging
- Updating personal information
- Links to platforms that provide additional services/information to Veterans.

No one identified any services they would rather not conduct via My VAC Account, though it was noted that there are certain things that are more effectively discussed one-on-one, such as with a case manager.

Only a few participants said they have encountered problems using their My VAC account in the last year or so. Problems included receiving error messages, such as 404-error messages, and technical problems with the 2FA process, which were quickly resolved. Such problems were identified as having occurred as recently as within the last month (i.e., January 2025).

3. Use and Perceptions of "Track your Applications"

This section of the report focuses on respondents' use and perceptions of the "Track your applications" feature. The survey findings are presented first, followed by the focus group findings.

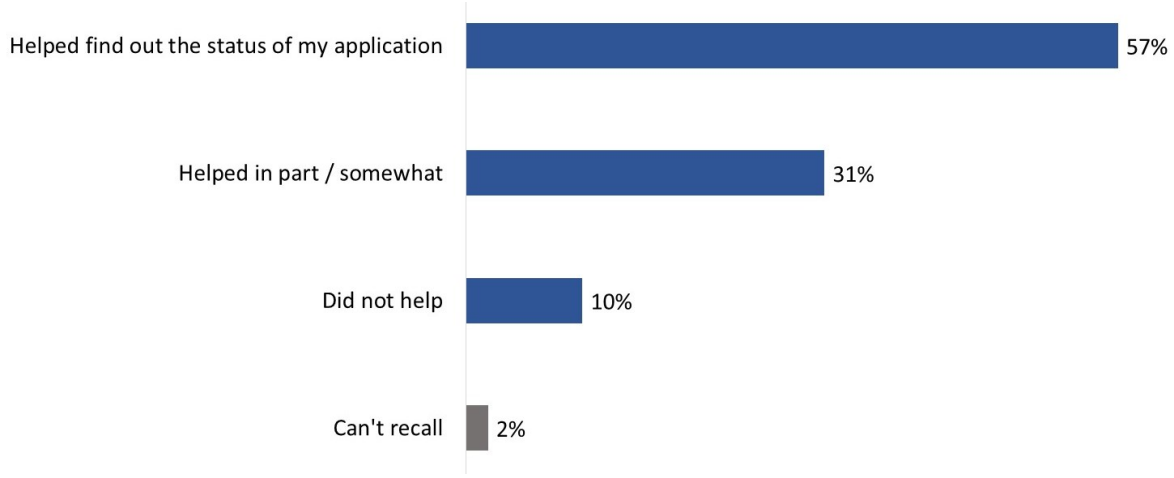
3.1 Survey Results

Most have used "Track your applications" and found it at least somewhat helpful

Nearly nine in ten survey respondents (88%) reported using the "Track your applications" feature in My VAC Account to monitor the status of their application(s). After increasing from 85% to 91% between 2017 and 2019, the incidence of using this feature has not changed since 2021, when 90% reported using "Track your applications".

Respondents who used "Track your applications" (n=662) were asked whether it helped them determine the status of their application. The majority found the tool at least somewhat helpful: 57% said it helped them track their application status, while 31% said it was partially helpful. Only 10% reported that the tool did not assist them in finding out their application status (and 2% could not recall).

Figure 10: Usefulness of "Track your applications"



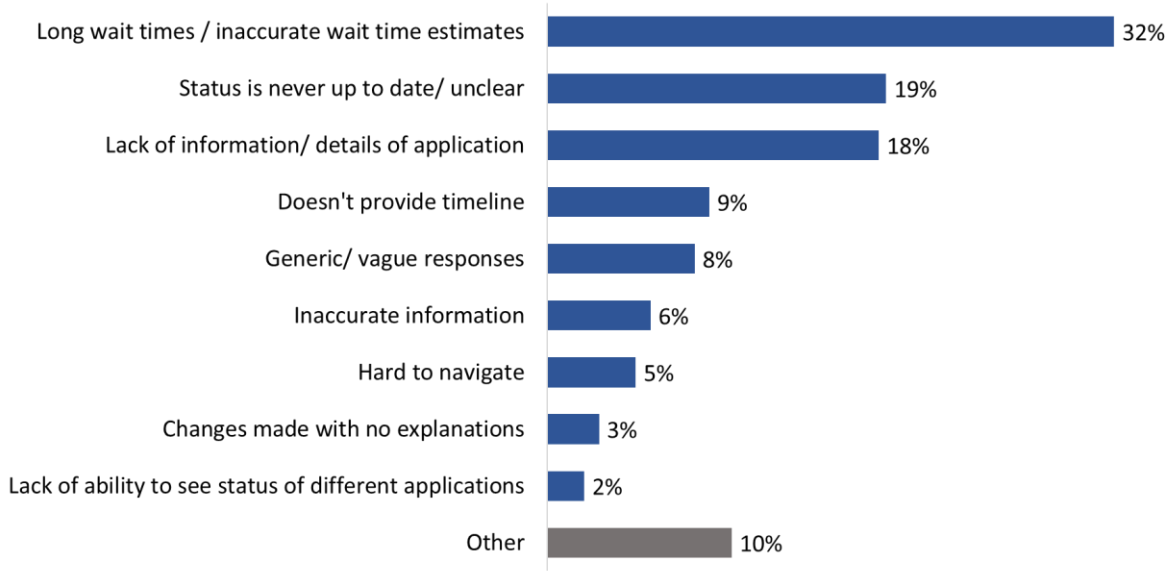
Base: n=662; respondents who have used track your applications.
Q24: Did "Track your applications" help you find out the status of your application?

The likelihood of saying "Track your applications" helped them find out the status of their application increased with age, from 39% of those aged 18 to 39 to 66% of those aged 60 and older.

Wait times are the main reason "Track your applications" is viewed as not helpful

Survey respondents who said "Track your applications" did not help them find out the status of their application were asked to explain why they felt this way. Eleven percent did not provide a reason. Among those who did (n=244), one-third (32%) pointed to long wait times and inaccurate wait time estimates. Following this, similar numbers said the status is never up to date or it is unclear (19%) and the My VAC Account feature lacks detailed information about applications (18%). Other reasons were cited by fewer than 10% of respondents and are shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Reason(s) "Track your applications" was not helpful



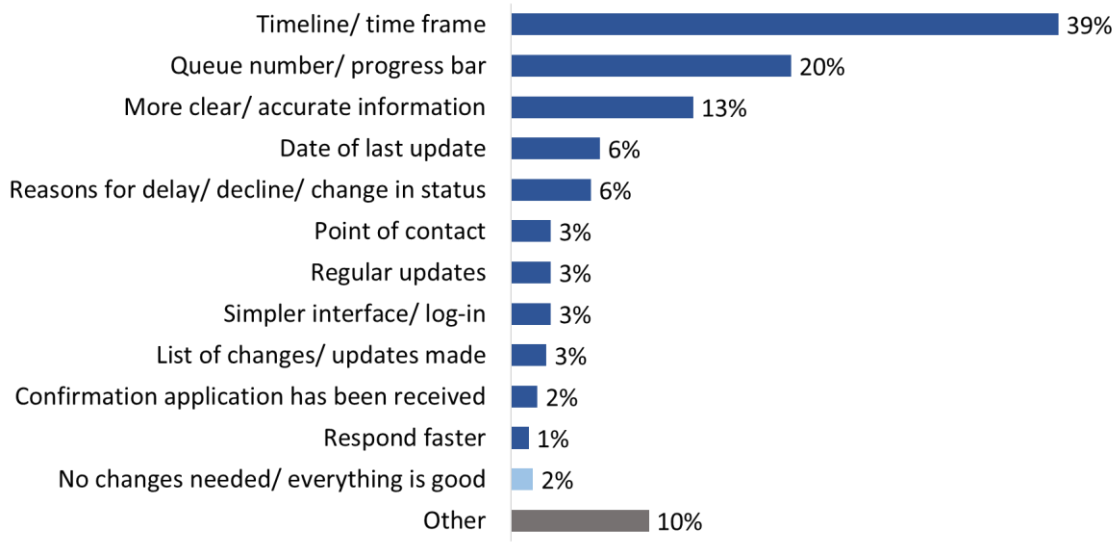
Base: n=244; respondents who have used "Track your applications" and did not find it helpful, excluding those who said "don't know".
Q25: Why did you say that the "Track your applications" feature did not help you find out the status of your application? [Multiple Responses Accepted]

Timeline feature and progress bar – top suggestions to improve "Track your applications"

All respondents who have used the "Track your applications" feature were asked what additional information they would like to see included about their application status. A majority (58%) had no suggestions.

Among those who provided feedback (n=315), 39% expressed a desire for a timeline or estimated time frame for each phase of the process, while 20% wanted clearer insights into where their application stands, such as a progress bar. Other requests included more precise and accurate information (13%), the date their application was last updated or reviewed (6%), and explanations for delays, changes, or denials (6%). Additional suggestions were mentioned in smaller proportions, as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Additional information for "Track your applications"



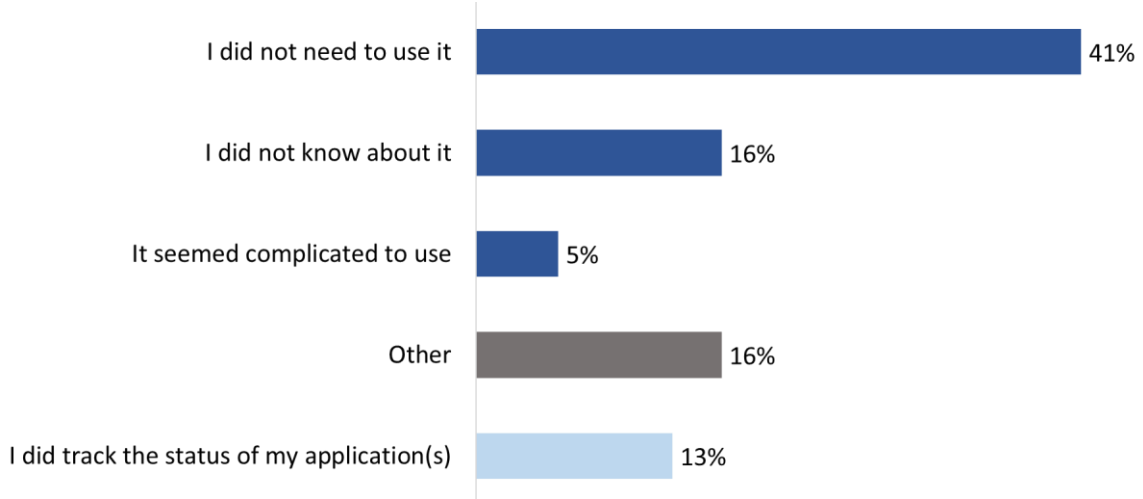
Base: n=315; respondents who have used "Track your applications", excluding those who said "don't know".
Q26: What other information about the status of your application would you like the "Track your applications" feature to provide? [Multiple Responses Accepted]

Many of those who have not used "Track your applications" cited lack of need

Survey respondents who have not used "Track your applications" (n=91) were asked why. The most common reason, cited by 41%, was lack of need. A smaller proportion (16%) said they were unaware of the feature, while 5% felt it seemed complicated to use. Other reasons (16%) for not using "Track your applications" were mentioned by individual respondents.

Additionally, 13% of respondents thought they had tracked the status of their application(s), though they did not identify "Track your applications" as one of the features in My VAC Account that they have used.

Figure 13: Reason(s) for not using "Track your applications"



Base: n=91; respondents who have not used “Track your applications”; don’t know: 7%, prefer not to say: 1%. Q23: Earlier you indicated that you haven’t used the “Track your applications” feature in My VAC Account to view the status of your application(s). Why is that? [Multiple Responses Accepted]

3.2 Focus Group Results

All focus group participants were aware of the “Track your applications” feature in My VAC Account, and most had used it to check the status of an online application. Those who used the feature regularly described it as easy to use and effective in meeting their needs. The service was considered important for the following reasons:

- It keeps them up to date about the progress of their application(s).
- It helps ease their minds and relieve anxiety by providing reassurance that their application is progressing, giving them a sense that someone is actively tracking their file(s).
- Applications can have important financial implications for applicants, creating a sense of urgency about their progress. Updates allow applicants to monitor the status of applications they consider particularly important.

Nearly half the participants said they have contacted VAC for a follow-up after using “Track your applications”. Reasons for doing so included the following:

- Wanting to understand why the application process is taking longer than expected or exceeding the estimated processing time.
- The desire for more precise information, including:
  - why the application process was marked ‘complete’ without specifying if it was successful;
  - why the status of an application has not yet changed and progressed to another stage; and
  - which particular application had been recently updated.
- Wanting explanations and clarification of terms or expressions, especially medical ones with which applicants are not familiar.

Those who contacted VAC for a follow-up after using “Track your applications” did so by phone and secure messaging. Those who had not contacted VAC for a follow-up said they would prefer to do so through secure messaging. Asked what could be done to minimize the likelihood of feeling a need to follow-up, participants focused on getting more precise or detailed updates on the status of their applications. It was also suggested that applicants would be less likely to follow up if VAC provided realistic processing time estimates.

Nearly all participants said they are signed up to receive email notifications when the status of their applications changes. While described as useful, it was observed that these notifications would be more useful if they contained more meaningful information about the change in status instead of simply noting that their application has moved from one stage to the next.

Participants were then asked to review the following possible enhancements to “Track your applications”:

- *A visual indicator to show which application has been recently updated.*

- *The ability to sort and filter applications, keeping only in-progress or recently completed ones in the main list.*
- *Visible dates for when each processing stage started.*
- *A dedicated space for uploading any missing documents related to an application.*
- *Decision letters directly linked from the "Track your applications" page.*

All of these potential enhancements were seen as having an impact on some participants' experience. Impacts associated with each specific enhancement included the following:

- **Visual indicator:** A visual indicator to show which application has been recently updated would provide more clarity and detail for applicants, especially if they have a number of applications under review. It was also re-iterated that applicants may have assigned priority to certain applications, and this would provide them with a sense of where things stand regarding applications that they consider most important or urgent.
- **Sort and filter:** The ability to sort and filter applications would eliminate 'clutter' and allow applicants to focus on applications in progress.
- **Visible dates:** Visible dates for when each processing stage started would provide a concrete benchmark that would help reduce anxiety and frustration, as well as provide a record to ensure that an application does not get lost in the process. For example, if a problem occurs with the processing of an application, specific dates could be referenced.
- **Document uploads:** A dedicated space for uploading missing documents related to an application would make it clear which specific document is missing and improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the application process.
- **Decision letters:** Decision letters directly linked from Track your application would improve the efficiency and speed of the application process.

All these enhancements were considered impactful by at least some participants, but visible dates for when each processing stage started and a dedicated space for uploading missing documents were most frequently identified as the most useful improvements—suggesting they should be a priority for VAC. When asked if there were any additional features, information, or resources they would you like to see added to the tracking of applications, no further suggestions were made.

While not related specifically to the tracking of applications, participants suggested that there should be some kind of linkage of platforms between VAC and various rehabilitation programs to make it easier for Veterans to have a better overall understanding of the connections between the various services available to them.

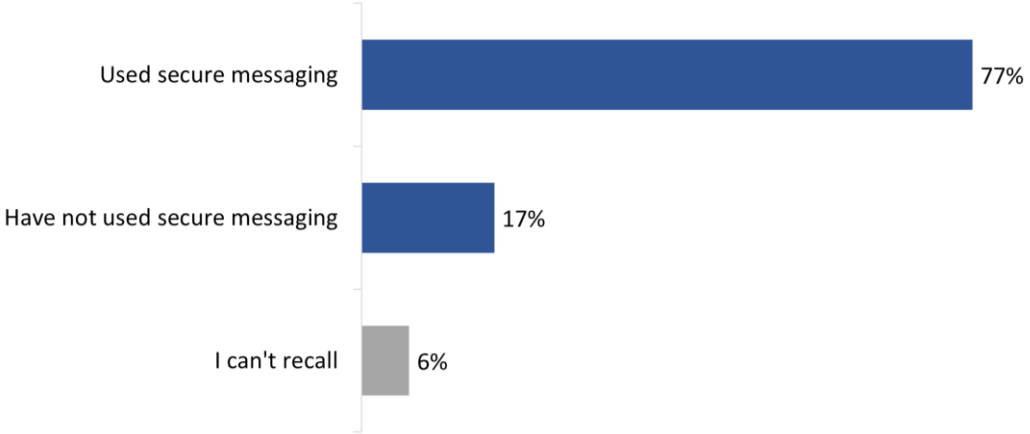
4. Use and Impressions of Secure Messaging

This section of the report discusses survey respondents' experience contacting VAC through a secure message in My VAC Account. Secure messaging was only explored in the survey; therefore, this section does not refer to findings from the focus groups.

Slightly more than three-quarters have used secure messaging in the past 12 months

In the past 12 months, 77% of those surveyed have tried contacting VAC through secure messaging, while 17% have not and 6% could not recall. Use of secure messaging has increased significantly since the 2017 baseline survey, when 61% reported trying to connect through secure messaging. While usage remained steady between 2019 (81%) and 2021 (80%), it has seen a slight decline this year (77% in 2025).

Figure 14: Use of Secure Messaging in past 12 months



Base: n=755; all respondents.
Q14. In the past 12 months, have you tried contacting VAC through secure messaging?

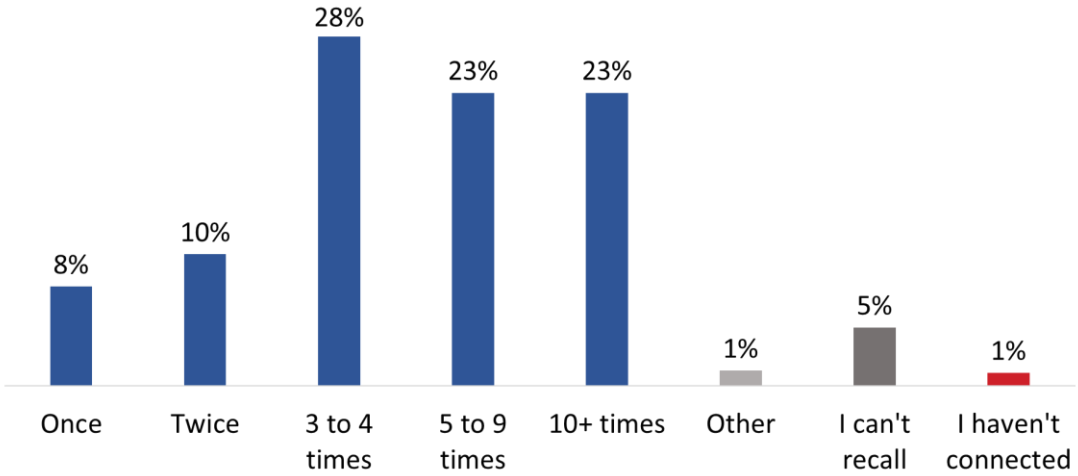
Those who used My VAC Account once a month or more were significantly more likely to report having used secure messaging in the past 12 months, as compared to those who use their account less than once a month. Specifically, 54% of respondents who use their account less than once a month tried contacting VAC through secure messaging compared to:

- 91% of respondents who use My VAC Account more than once a week;
- 85% of respondents who use My VAC Account approximately once a week; and
- 76% of respondents who use My VAC Account approximately once a month.

Frequency of connecting with VAC staff via secure messaging varies significantly

Survey respondents who attempted to contact VAC staff through secure messaging in the past 12 months (n=582) were asked how many times they successfully connected with staff during this period. As shown in Figure 15, the frequency of interactions varied significantly. The single largest proportion (28%) reported connecting three to four times, while close to half connected five to nine times (23%) or ten or more times (23%). Only 1% indicated they had not successfully connected at all.

Figure 15: Frequency of Connecting with VAC Staff via Secure Messaging

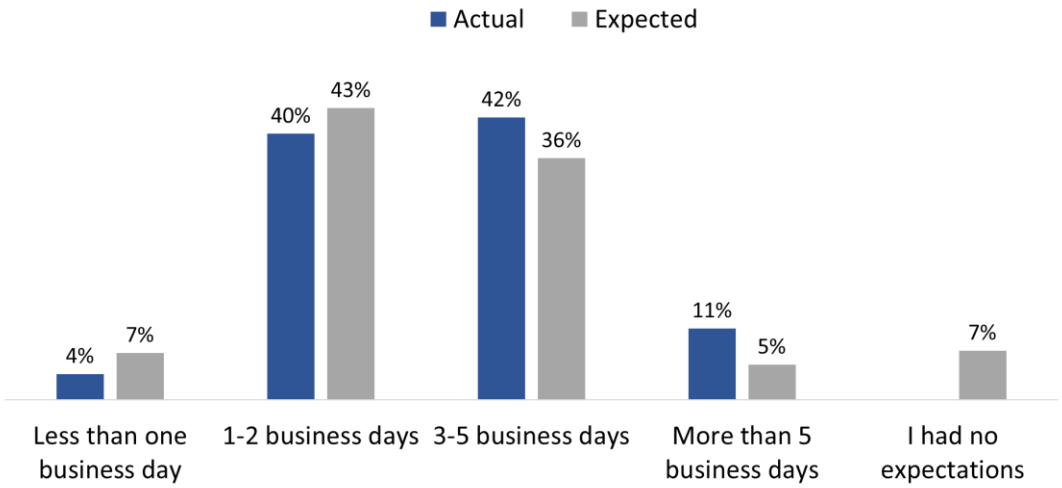


Base: n=582; those who tried contacting VAC through secure messaging in the last year.
Q15. Approximately how many times have you connected directly with VAC staff through secure messaging in the past 12 months?

Most received a secure message reply within 1 to 5 business days, meeting expectations.

The majority of respondents expected to wait one to two (43%) or three to five (36%) business days to receive a reply through secure messaging. Expectations generally aligned with My VAC Account users' experience. In actuality, 40% waited an average of one to two business days, while 42% waited an average of three to five business days to receive a reply through secure messaging. Few reported waiting less than one business day (4%) or more than five business days (11%) to receive a response to a secure message.

Figure 16: Waiting time for Secure Messaging reply



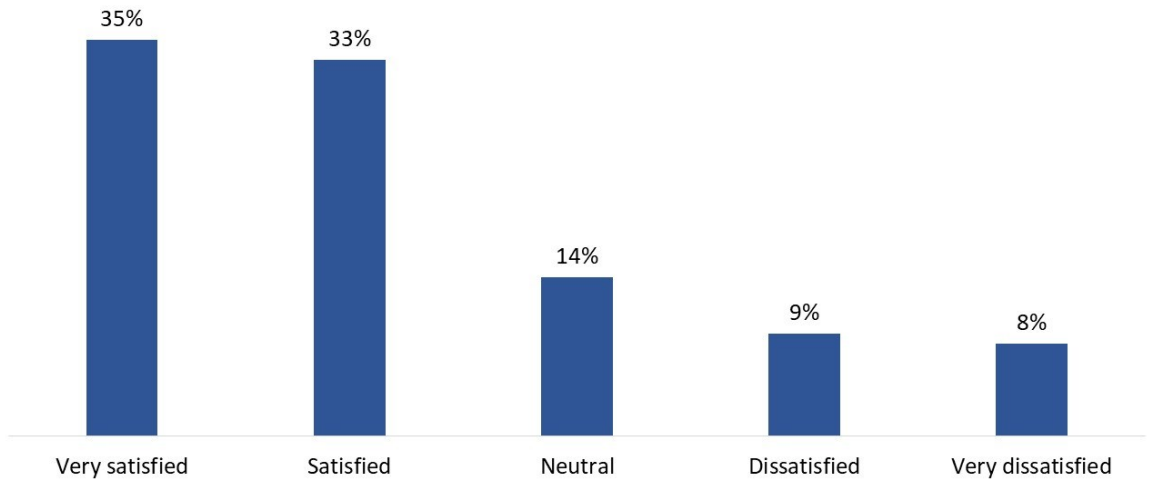
Base: n=576; respondents who have used secure messaging in the past 12 months.
Q16. On average, how long did you wait to receive a response when you connected directly with VAC staff through secure messaging? Can't recall / prefer not to say: 4%.
Q17. How long did you expect to wait for a secure message reply? Can't recall / prefer not to say: 1%.

Wait times have remained the same since the 2021 follow-up. After the proportion of My VAC Account users receiving a reply within one to two business days declined to 25% in 2019 (from the 2017 baseline of 40%), it increased to 38% in 2021 and now sits at 40%.

Most are satisfied with their experience using secure messaging

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction using secure messaging to connect with VAC staff in the past 12 months. Approximately two-thirds (68%) said they are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience. Seventeen percent were dissatisfied, while 14% were neutral (i.e., neither satisfied nor dissatisfied).

Figure 17: Satisfaction with secure messaging system



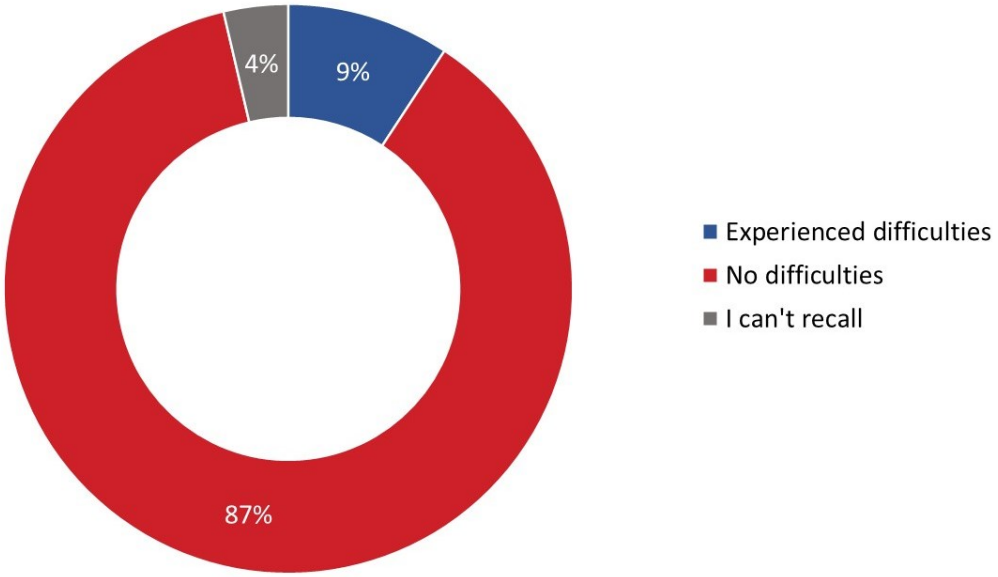
Base: n=576; respondents who have used secure messaging in the past 12 months.
Q18. How satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with your experience using secure messaging to connect directly with VAC staff in the past 12 months?

The likelihood of saying they were very satisfied with secure messaging increased with age, from 20% of those age 18 to 39 to 46% of those age 60 or older. Individuals residing in Ontario (22%) were less likely to report being very satisfied with their use of secure messaging compared to those in other regions: 39% in Atlantic Canada, 49% in Quebec, and 38% in the West.

Almost nine in 10 did not have any difficulties using secure messaging

The vast majority (87%) of those who used secure messaging in the past 12 months did not face any difficulties with the service.

Figure 18: Percentage that had difficulty using secure messaging



Base: n=576; respondents who have used secure messaging in the past 12 months.
Q19. In the past 12 months, did you have any difficulties using secure messaging?

Survey respondents who did face difficulties (n=53) pointed to several issues, including not receiving a timely response (i.e., it took too long) (25 respondents), not having their issue(s) resolved (23 respondents), or not knowing where to send the message (i.e., VAC, BPA, VRAB) (18 respondents).[2] Other reasons were reported by fewer than 10 respondents and included receiving unsatisfactory responses or no response at all, being called back rather than re-contact using secure messaging, experiencing unspecified technical issues, and being unable to talk to their case manager.

Variety of suggestions offered to improve secure messaging

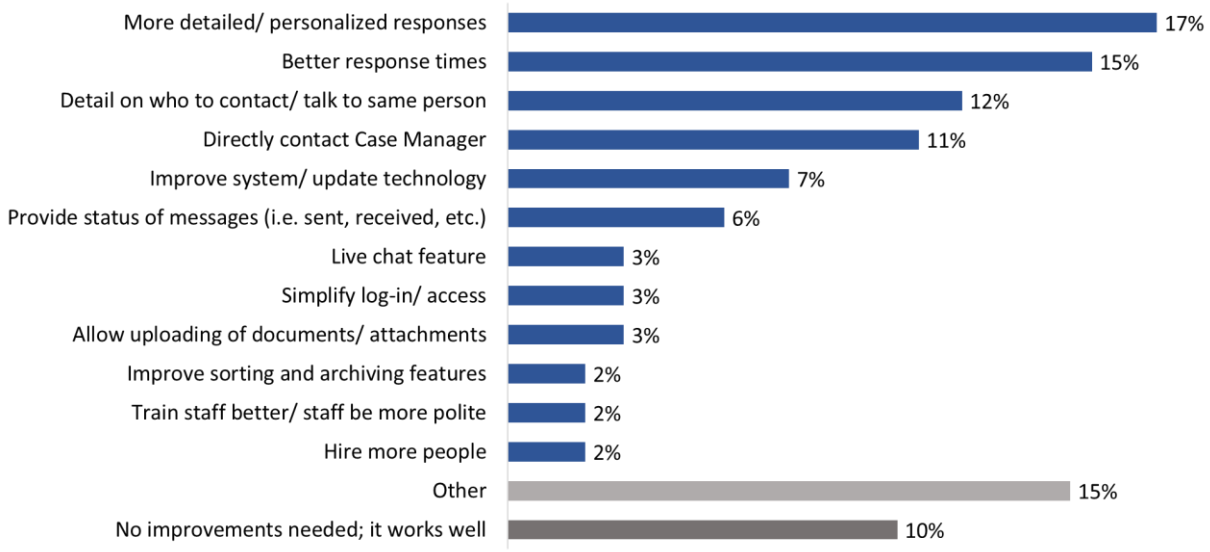
Survey respondents who had tried contacting VAC through secure messaging in the last year (n=582) were asked if they had any suggestions to offer to improve the service. In response, 69% had no suggestions for improvement.

Among those who provided suggestions (n=179), 17% recommended providing more detailed or personalized responses to their messages, while 15% suggested improving response times. Additionally, 12% indicated that having clear information on whom to contact—or maintaining communication with the same person throughout the process—would be beneficial, and 11% expressed a desire for direct access to a Case Manager. Other suggestions were mentioned in smaller proportions, as shown in Figure 19.

Ten percent stated that no improvements were necessary, as the system already works well.

[2] Q20. What difficulties did you experience? [Multiple responses accepted]. Base: n=53; respondents who had difficulty using secure messaging in the past 12 months.

Figure 19: Suggestions for improving secure messaging



Base: n=179; those who used secure messaging and provided a response [Multiple responses accepted]
Q21. Do you have any suggestions to help improve secure messaging?

5. Overall Assessments of My VAC Account

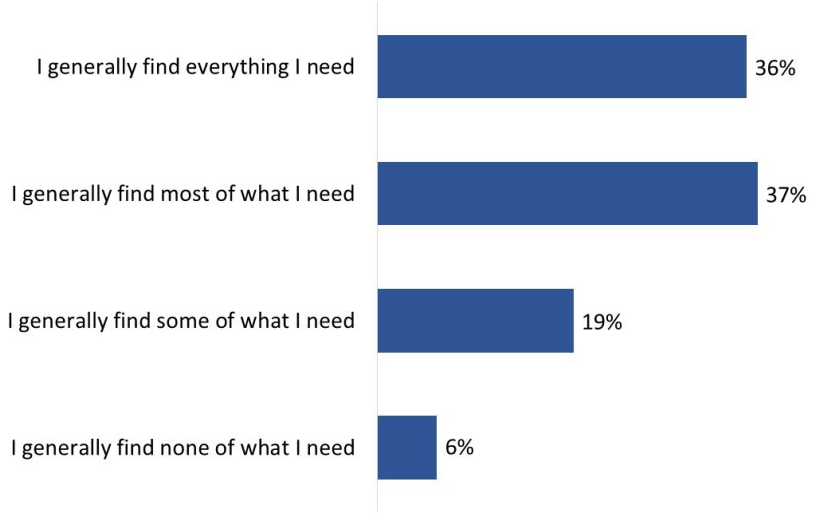
This section of the report discusses overall assessments of My VAC Account. The survey findings are presented first, followed by the focus group findings.

5.1 Survey Results

Three-quarters generally find most or all of what they need when visiting My VAC Account

Approximately three-quarters of surveyed My VAC Account users said they find most of what they need (37%) or everything they need (36%) when visiting My VAC Account. In addition, two in 10 (19%) generally find some of what they need. Very few (6%) find none of what they need when visiting My VAC Account. Compared to the last follow-up survey, more respondents reported finding everything they need (29% in 2021 versus 36% in 2025).

Figure 20: Experience accessing information on My VAC Account



Base: n=755; all respondents; I can't recall: 1%.
Q27. Which of the following best describes your experience accessing information when you visit My VAC Account?

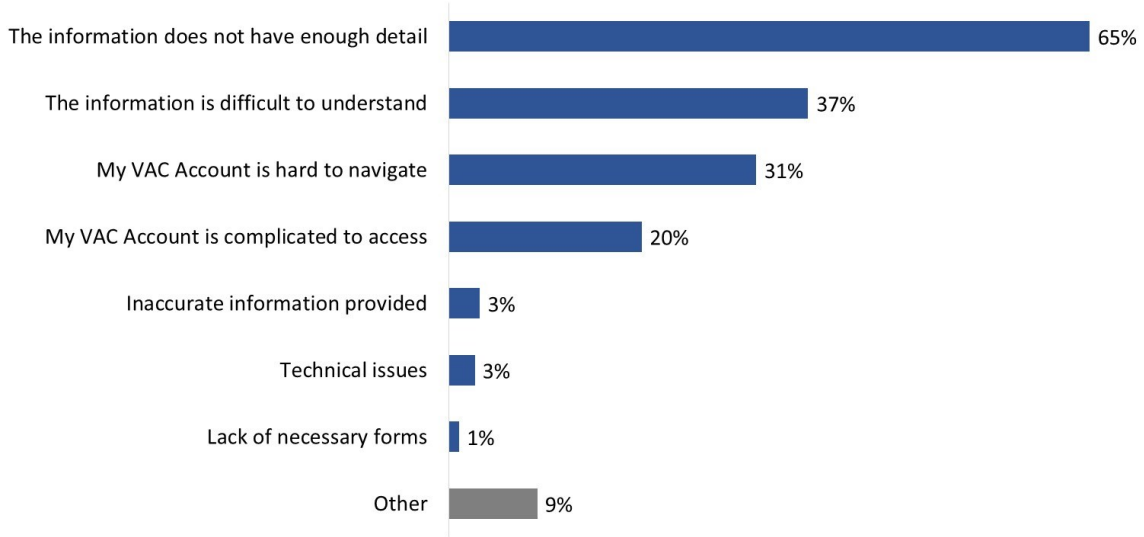
The likelihood of finding everything they need increased with age, from 21% of those aged 18 to 39 to 45% of those aged 60 and older. Additionally, men (39% versus 24% of women) and retired RCMP members (54% versus 37% of retired CAF members) are more likely to find everything they need when visiting My VAC Account.

Most of those who do not find everything on My VAC Account cited lack of details as the reason

My VAC Account users who generally do not find all the information they need when visiting My VAC Account (n=189) were most likely to attribute this to lack of details. Specifically, two-thirds (65%) noted that the information available in My VAC Account does not have enough detail. This is the same reason that topped the list in 2021, when it was mentioned by 67% of surveyed My VAC Account users.

Lack of details was followed by concerns about clarity, with 37% finding the information difficult to understand. Additionally, some users cited usability issues, noting that My VAC Account is difficult to navigate (31%) or complicated to access (20%). Other reasons were mentioned in smaller proportions, as illustrated in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Reason(s) for not finding all the information needed



Base: n=189; respondents who said they did not find all the information needed; don't know: 3% / prefer not to say: 2%.
Q28. Why did you generally not find all the information you needed when you visited My VAC Account over the past year? [Multiple responses accepted]

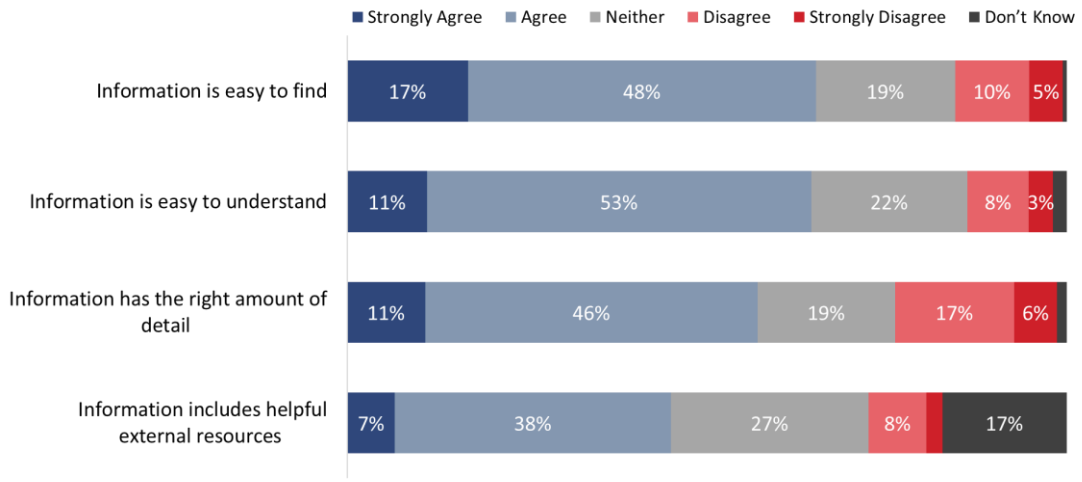
Assessments of the information in My VAC Account were mixed

Two-thirds of My VAC Account users agreed that the information in My VAC Account is easy to find (65%) and understand (64%). Perceptions of the ease of finding and understanding the information have remained largely unchanged since the 2021 follow-up survey.

A smaller majority (57%) said the information has the right amount of detail, while nearly one-quarter (23%) said this is not the case. This represents an increase since 2021 when 41% agreed and 40% disagreed that information is sufficiently detailed. Recall that the main reason My VAC Account users generally do not find everything they need is the perception that the information available lacks sufficient detail.

Respondents were least likely to agree that the information in My VAC Account includes helpful external resources—45% agreed that this is the case. Those who did not agree were more likely to be neutral (27%) or to not know (17%) than to express any level of disagreement (10%). Compared to 2021, fewer respondents felt that My VAC Account includes helpful external resources (51% in 2021 versus 45% in 2025).

Figure 22: Perceptions of the information in My VAC Account



*Values of 2% or less are not labelled on the graph.
Base: n=755; all respondents
Q29. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the information in My VAC Account?

Retired RCMP members were more likely to strongly agree that the information in My VAC Account is easy to find (30% compared to 10% of still serving CAF members and 16% of retired CAF members). Francophones were more likely than Anglophones to agree that the information in My VAC Account includes helpful external resources (51% versus 37%).

Respondents who did not agree that the information in My VAC Account is easy to find, easy to understand, sufficiently detailed, or includes helpful external links were asked to explain why they felt this way.[3] A summary of the themes that emerged from the responses is presented below:

Statement	Feedback
Information in My VAC Account is easy to find. (n=170)	Reasons for disagreeing that the information in My VAC Account is easy to find included difficulty navigating the online service, perceptions that the layout is confusing, or concerns that the information is not sufficiently detailed.
Information in My VAC Account is easy to understand. (n=90)	Those who disagreed tended to point to their perception that My VAC Account is not easy to use (e.g., it is hard to navigate), that the wording is confusing (e.g., it's written for a lawyer), or that the information provided is not helpful.
Information in My VAC Account has the right amount of detail. (n=170)	Reasons for disagreeing with this statement were varied and included the perception that My VAC Account provides inaccurate wait times for the processing of applications, the information is too wordy, or the information lacks the necessary details.

[3] Q30. Why did you disagree with the statement: [INSERT ITEM]?
Base: respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed with each statement in Figure 22.

Statement	Feedback
Information in My VAC Account includes helpful external resources. (n=78)	Those who disagreed that My VAC Account includes helpful external resources attributed this to not seeing any links or to the links not working.

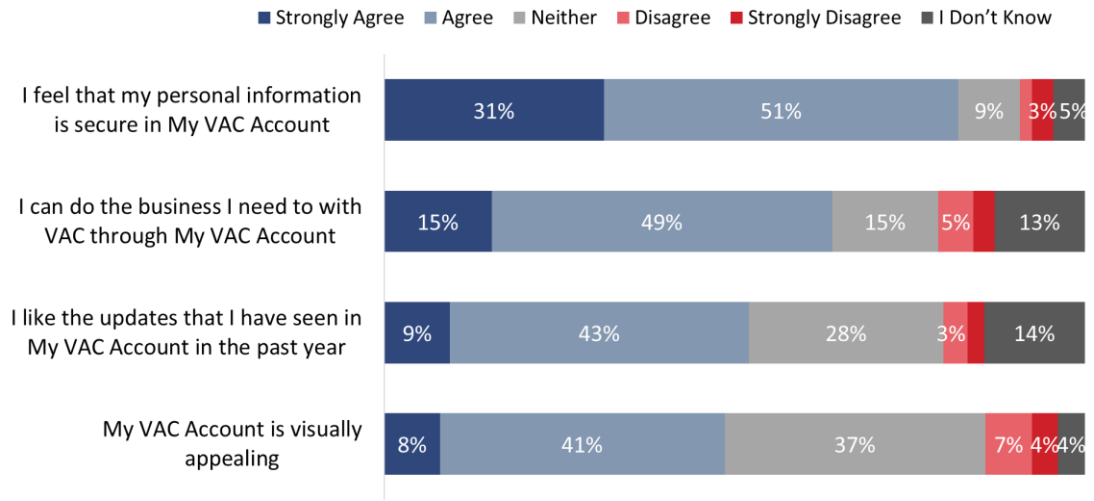
Perceptions of different aspects of My VAC Account varied, but were generally positive

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about aspects of My VAC Account. The My VAC Account users surveyed were most likely to agree that their personal information is secure in My VAC Account (82% agreed with this statement, including 31% that strongly agreed). Following this, approximately two-thirds (64%) said they can do the business they need with VAC, the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, or the Veterans Review and Appeal Board through My VAC Account, while roughly half (52%) like the updates they have seen in My VAC Account in the past year. Survey respondents were least likely to agree that My VAC Account is visually appealing (49%).

My VAC Account users who did not agree with these statements were more likely to be ambivalent or not know how to respond than to express any level of disagreement.

This year, fewer respondents reported liking the updates to My VAC Account (52% compared to 58% in 2021 and 65% in 2019), finding the site visually appealing (49% compared to 58% in 2021 and 63% in 2019), and feeling they can do their business with the Department through My VAC Account (64% versus 68% in 2021 and 71% in 2019).

Figure 23: Perceptions of different aspects of My VAC Account



*Values of 2% or less are not labelled on the graph.
Base: n=755; all respondents
Q31. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Agreement that My VAC Account is visually appealing increased with age, from 33% among those aged 18 to 39 to 47% among those aged 60 and older. Similarly, strong agreement that personal information is secure in My VAC Account also increased with age, from 14% among those 18 to 39 to 40% among those aged 60 and older.

Respondents in Quebec were significantly more likely to strongly agree that their personal information is secure in My VAC Account (45%) compared to respondents from Atlantic Canada (29%) and Ontario (24%). Additionally, men were more likely than women to agree they can do the business they need with VAC through My VAC Account (51% versus 35%).

Those who disagreed with any of these statements about My VAC Account were asked to explain why.[4] A summary of the themes that emerged from the responses is presented below:

Statement	Feedback
I feel that my personal information is secure in My VAC Account. (n=36)	Those who disagreed that they feel their personal information is secure in My VAC Account pointed to data breaches and a general lack of trust in government.
I can do the business I need to with VAC through My VAC Account. (n=61)	Reasons for disagreeing with this statement included the following types of concerns: the perception that the site provides inaccurate wait times for application processing, not getting a response or hearing back from VAC, having to call VAC to resolve an issue or get the information sought on My VAC Account, and My VAC Account being hard to navigate and use.
My VAC Account is visually appealing. (n=78)	Those who disagreed that My VAC Account is visually appealing attributed this to myriad reasons including the perception that it looks “dated”, is “too busy”, lacks visuals, is not intuitively designed, and is not mobile friendly.
I like the updates that I have seen in My VAC Account in the past year. (n=44)	My VAC Account users who disagreed with this statement tended to point to the following: their perception that there have not been any updates to My VAC Account and the lack of detailed information provided when tracking applications.

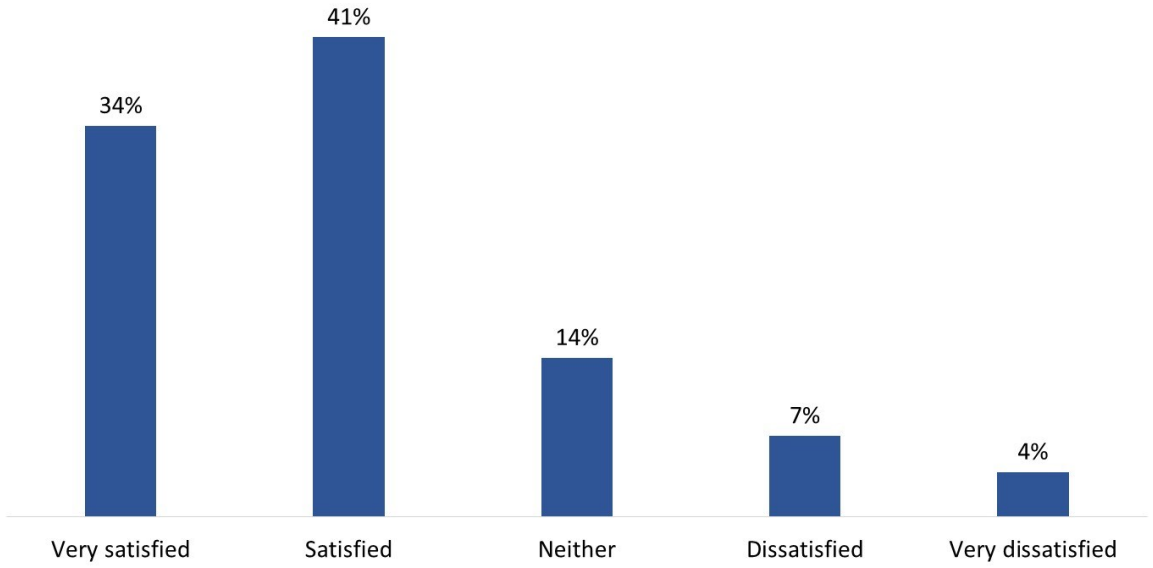
Three-quarters are satisfied with their experience using My VAC Account

Three-quarters (75%) of surveyed My VAC Account users were satisfied overall with their experience using My VAC Account, including 34% who are very satisfied. Relatively few (11%) expressed dissatisfaction with their experience using My VAC Account, while the rest (14%) are indifferent (i.e., neither satisfied nor dissatisfied).

Satisfaction levels have remained fairly stable since the 2017 baseline survey, when 71% were satisfied. In the follow-up years, satisfaction reached 75% in 2019, returned to 71% in 2021 and increased to 75% again in 2025. What has changed more noticeably over time is the proportion of My VAC Account users who are very satisfied—34% this year below the high of 41% recorded in 2019.

[4] Q32. Why did you disagree with the statement: [INSERT ITEM]?
Base: respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed with each statement in Figure 23.

Figure 24: Overall satisfaction with My VAC Account



Base: n=755; all respondents.
Q33. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your experience using My VAC Account?

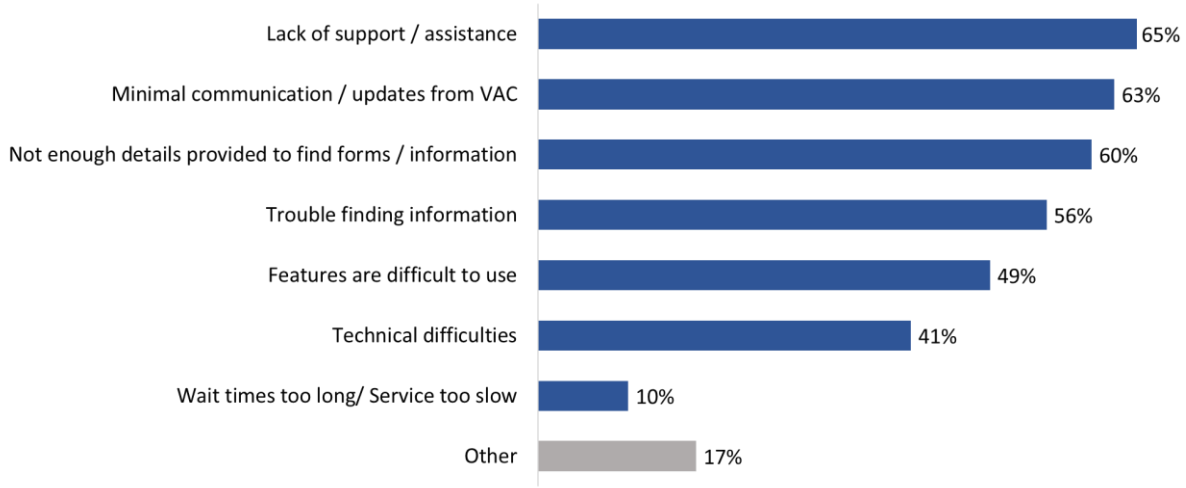
As age increased among survey respondents, so too did the likelihood of being very satisfied with their experience using My VAC Account: from 14% of those aged 18 to 39 to 44% of those aged 60 and over.

Regionally, respondents from Quebec were the most likely to be very satisfied: 52% compared to 35% of respondents from Atlantic Canada, 26% from Ontario, and 34% from western Canada. Additionally, retired RCMP members were more likely than retired CAF members to report being very satisfied with their experience using My VAC Account (51% versus 33%).

Those dissatisfied with My VAC Account cited a number of reasons why

Respondents who were dissatisfied with their experience using My VAC Account (n=81) were asked to explain their reasons. The most common concerns were a lack of support and assistance (65%), minimal communication or updates from the Department (63%), and insufficient details when searching for specific forms or information (61%). Additionally, more than half (56%) expressed dissatisfaction due to difficulty finding information, while nearly half (49%) struggled with using the platform's features and 41% pointed to unspecified technical difficulties. Ten percent attributed their dissatisfaction to long wait times or slow service.

Figure 25: Reason for dissatisfaction with My VAC Account



Base: n=81; those dissatisfied with My VAC Account; don't know: 1% / prefer not to say: 1%
Q34. Why are you dissatisfied with your My VAC Account experience? [Multiple responses accepted].

5.2 Focus Group Results

Among focus group participants, there was a widespread impression that My VAC Account is user-friendly and meets users' needs and expectations. Specifically,

- The visual design of My VAC Account was described as intuitive and friendly.
- There are no problems reading text or distinguishing colours.
- Finding information or features was described as relatively easy, as was the completion of tasks.
- Information was described as clear and easy to understand.

Problems or issues that have been encountered included the following:

- Difficulty understanding how to ensure that a claim submitted through Medavie Blue Cross is deposited directly into their bank account.
- Difficulty finding specific forms.
- Being automatically logged out of the system after certain searches (e.g., receiving a message indicating you are exiting the system) and then having to log back in.

A few focus group participants who have accessed My VAC Account on a mobile device, such as a tablet, said they have encountered issues. Reported issues included difficulty reading text on a mobile device due to screen size.

Suggested improvements to make My VAC Account more appealing or easier to use were limited and related mainly to accessing forms, with a focus on the following:

- Improving access to forms by making it more user-friendly, particularly by simplifying the process of locating specific required forms.
- Reducing the number of steps or prompts required to access a form.
- Simplifying the process of automatically opening PDF attachments, such as T4s.

Additional suggestions included adding a chat function and incorporating more assistive technologies, such as audio descriptions for visually impaired users. A few emphasized the importance of ensuring My VAC Account is fully compatible with screen readers. It was also suggested that My VAC Account be more closely integrated with the Medavie Blue Cross website, if possible, given that many Veterans interact with both platforms. This would go beyond simply providing a link to Medavie Blue Cross within My VAC account, offering a more seamless user experience.

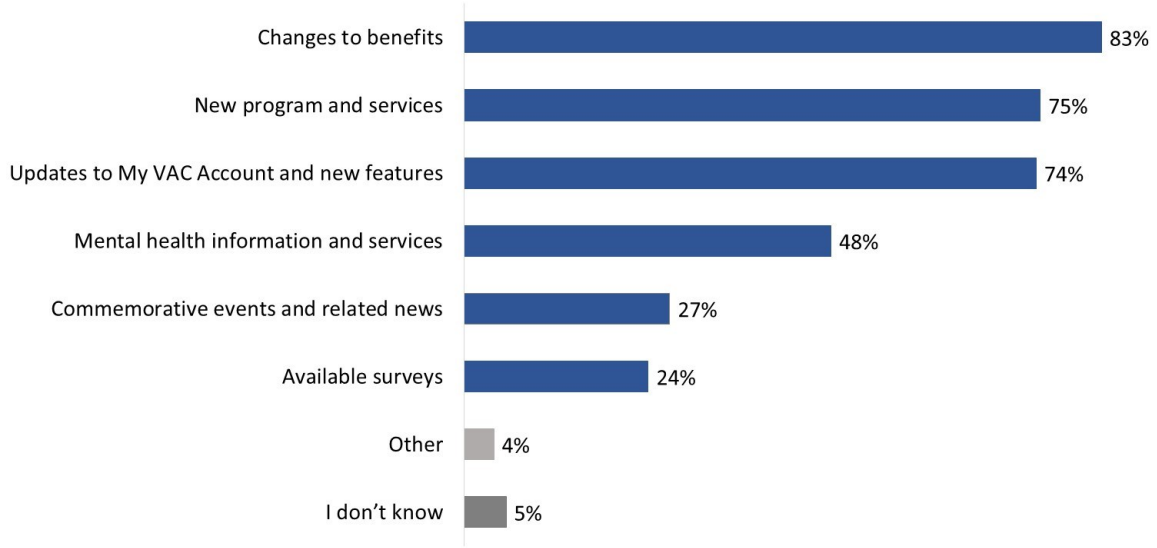
6. Future Directions

Survey respondents were asked which topics they would like to read about in the News and Notifications Section of My VAC Account and focus group participants were asked about potential enhancements to My VAC Account. The survey findings are presented first, followed by the focus group findings.

6.1 Survey Results

Many survey respondents would like to read about the following in the News and Notifications Section at the bottom of the main page of My VAC Account: changes to benefits (83%), new program and services (75%), and updates to My VAC Account and new features (74%). In addition, nearly half (48%) are interested in reading about mental health information and services, while almost one-quarter reported interest in reading about commemorative events and related news (27%) or interest in available surveys (24%). Five percent did not know what other topics to include in this section.

Figure 26: News and Notifications section



Base: n=755; all respondents; prefer not to say: 1%.
Q22. What topics would you like to read about here [News and Notifications Section at the bottom of the main page of My VAC Account]?

My VAC Account users aged 60 and over were more likely to be interested in reading about updates to My VAC Account and new features compared to those aged 18 to 39 (80% versus 60%, respectively). Francophones were more likely than Anglophones to be interested in reading about updates to My VAC Account and new features (84% versus 73%) and available surveys (32% versus 23%).

Additionally, respondents who used My VAC Account at least once a week were more likely to be interested in reading about new program services and mental health information and services compared to those who use it less than once a month. Specifically:

- 83% of those who use My VAC Account more than once a week and 80% of those who use My VAC Account once a week are interested in reading about new programs and services compared to 63% who use it less than once a month.
- 52% of those who use My VAC Account at least once a week are interested in reading about mental health information and services compared to 33% of those who use My VAC Account less than once a month.

6.2 Focus Group Results

Only a few suggestions were offered when focus group participants were asked in an open-ended way what enhancements or changes to My VAC Account would be particularly useful to them. They included the following:

- More precise tracking of applications. This included more detail about what is happening at each stage in the process, identifying which specific application has been recently updated, and more precise timelines for each individual application.
- Direct access to a live person for individuals in distress or crisis.
- The capacity to continue an existing line of communication to resolve problems/issues. For example, if VAC sends an email notification that they have not received a certain document, it should be possible to try to resolve the issue by responding directly to that email instead of having to open an entirely new line of communication.

Participants were then asked which of the following possible enhancements to My VAC Account would be useful to them:

- *More guided web forms (i.e., special windows that walk one through the form, question-by-question, instead of traditional PDF forms).*
- *Ability to upload files larger then 25 megabytes.*
- *Ability to add files and links within secure messages.*
- *Ability to download the summary of assessment document.*
- *Ability to receive two-factor authentication codes via a text message.*
- *Ability to use dark mode in My VAC Account (dark background with light text, reducing screen brightness).*
- *Ability to filter and favourite forms listed in My VAC Account.*

Each of these enhancements was described as useful by at least some participants, but the ones most likely to be considered useful were the ability to add files and links within secure messages and the ability to filter and favourite forms listed in My VAC Account.

Other online services used by participants that they would like to see incorporated into My VAC Account included apps (unspecified), privacy notices (e.g., specifications about how personal data is being stored and used, who has access to it), and the ability to provide VAC benefit payments as proof of income.

7. Comparison of Survey Results: 2017 to 2025

Veterans Affairs Canada conducts this POR at regular intervals to track changes in My VAC Account users' perceptions, behaviours, and experiences. The tables below present the results over time for key performance indicators.

Method used to register for My VAC Account

	2017	2019	2021	2025
% using GCKey	62%	57%	54%	46%
% using Sign-in Partner	36%	41%	43%	52%

Perceptions of the registration process

	2017	2019	2021*	2025
% saying it was easy	77%	75%	75%	76%

*Not directly comparable; this question was asked of all who registered in 2017, 2019, and 2025. In 2021, it was asked only of those who used GCKey.

Agreement: "The steps required to register for My VAC Account justifies the security it provides."

	2017	2019	2021	2025
% agreeing	76%	70%	81%	75%

Source of awareness of My VAC Account

% identifying each:	2017	2019	2021	2025
The CAF*	--	--	21%	23%
VAC staff member	28%	36%	25%	19%
Word of mouth	13%	15%	14%	17%
Browsing the VAC website	14%	16%	12%	9%

*Not a response option offered in 2017 and 2019.

Use of My VAC Account features

% reporting doing each of the following:	2017	2019	2021	2025
Tracking the status of applications	85%	91%	90%	88%
Applying online for VAC benefits and services	64%	82%	89%	91%
Using secure messaging	61%	81%	83%	84%
Updating personal information	76%	66%	70%	68%
Uploading documents	63%	73%	79%	84%
Signing up for direct deposit/changing bank information	46%	56%	63%	67%
Adding their email address to receive email notifications	63%	57%	59%	--
Viewing a summary of their benefits	80%	82%	82%	--

Average wait time for a response to a secure message

	2017	2019	2021	2025
% waited 1-2 business days	40%	25%	38%	40%
% waited 3-5 business days	32%	46%	47%	42%

% waited more than 5 business days	19%*	21%	9%	11%

*Not directly comparable; in 2017, the response option was “around a week” and “more than a week”.

Experience accessing information on My VAC Account

	2017	2019	2021	2025
% I generally find everything	--	--	29%	36%
% I generally find most of what I need	--	--	38%	37%
% I generally find some of what I need	--	--	28%	19%
% I generally find none of what I need	--	--	4%	6%

Perceptions of My VAC Account

% agreeing with each statement:	2017	2019	2021	2025
I can do the business I need through My VAC Account	--	71%	68%	64%
My VAC Account is visually appealing	62%	63%	58%	49%
I like the updates implemented in the past year	57%*	65%	58%	52%
The information in My VAC Account is easy to find	69%**	72%**	67%	65%
The information is easy to understand	78%**	77%	61%	65%

*Not directly comparable; the timeframe for evaluating was the last two years in 2017.
** Not directly comparable; the statements were: *It was easy to find what I was looking for in My VAC Account* (2017 and 2019) and *The information in My VAC Account is understandable* (2017).

Overall satisfaction with My VAC Account

	2017	2019	2021	2025
% satisfied	71%	75%	71%	75%

Appendix

1. Technical Specifications

1.1 Online Survey

A non-probability survey was conducted online with 755 My VAC account users between January 14 and 24, 2025. The following specifications applied to the online survey:

- The survey averaged 13 minutes to complete and was available in both official languages. In total, 83% of respondents completed the survey in English and 13% did so in French.
- The survey was pre-tested in advance of the fieldwork. There were no changes to the questionnaire as a result of the pre-test.
- This was an intercept survey; survey respondents were recruited through My VAC Account and VAC's main website and social media channels (specifically, Facebook, X, and LinkedIn). As such, there is no margin of sampling error to report for the survey sample.
- The survey data were not weighted.
- No response rate can be provided due to the intercept methodology. It is not known how many My VAC Account users noticed the survey invitation in their account, on VAC's main website, or on social media and declined to participate. What is known is the number of individuals who started the survey, but who did not complete it for one reason or another. In total, 1,031 people started the survey, and 755 completed it, which represents a completion rate of 73%.
- Survey samples generally are affected by survey non-response. This can bias the survey sample when the characteristics of respondents differ in significant ways from those of non-respondents. In this case, there is the potential for non-response bias. The survey sample reflects the preferences, and experiences of users who visited My VAC Account or used VAC's main website or social media channels during the data collection period. In other words, people who logged in to My VAC Account more frequently (e.g., to check the status of applications) or engaged with VAC more regularly via the Department's main website or social media are more likely to have responded to the survey.

1.2 Focus Groups

The following specifications applied to the online focus groups:

- Two online focus groups were conducted with My VAC Account users, one in English and one in French.
- Participants were recruited through advertisements in My VAC Account, VAC's main website, VAC's social media and stakeholder mailing lists.
- Both groups took place on February 25, 2025, and each group lasted two hours.
- A total of 16 My VAC Account users participated (eight participants in each group).
- All participants received a $125 honorarium to thank them for their time.

- This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants' views about the issues explored, but they cannot be generalized to the full population of My VAC Account users.

All steps of the project complied with *The Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research*.

2. Profile of Research Participants

The tables in this section present profiles of the research participants.

2.1 Online survey

Type of My VAC Account user	Percentage of survey respondents
Retired member of the CAF	70%
Retired member of the RCMP	12%
Serving member of the CAF	11%
Serving member of the RCMP	6%
Family member who receives benefits	2%
A power of attorney of an individual who receives benefits	1%
War Veteran	*

*Sample size is too small to identify.

Age	Percentage of survey respondents
18 to 39	7%
40 to 49	17%
50 to 59	23%
60 to 69	31%
70 to 79	16%
80+	5%
Prefer not to say	2%

Gender	Percentage of survey respondents
Women	13%
Men	84%
Another gender	1%
Prefer not to say	2%

Indigenous respondents	Percentage of survey respondents
First Nations	3%
Métis	4%
Inuk (Inuit)	*
Non-Indigenous	86%

Prefer not to say	2%

*Sample size is too small to identify.

Region	Percentage of survey respondents
Atlantic Canada	31%
Quebec	13%
Ontario	21%
West	35%

Language spoken at home	Percentage of survey respondents
English	84%
French	14%
Another language	*
Prefer not to say	1%

*Sample size is too small to identify.

2.2 Focus Groups

The characteristics of My VAC Account users who participated in the two focus groups are as follows:

Type of My VAC Account user	Number of focus group participants
Retired or still-serving member of the CAF	14
Retired or still-serving member of the RCMP	1
Family member	1

Age	Number of focus group participants
18 to 39	2
40 to 49	3
50 to 59	4
60 to 69	3
70 to 79	3
80+	1

Gender	Number of focus group participants
Women	5
Men	11

Region	Number of focus group participants
Atlantic Canada	3
Quebec	7

Ontario	1
West	5

Under-represented populations	**Number of focus group participants**
Indigenous Peoples	2
Members of racialized groups	3
Persons with a disability	6

3. Research Instruments

3.1 Online survey

Page 1: Landing Page

Please select the language in which you wish to complete the survey.

- ○ English
- ○ French

Page 2: Survey Intro Page

Background information

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this short survey about My VAC Account. The feedback you provide will help Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) to improve My VAC Account to better serve the Veteran community.

Points to remember:

- Your participation in the survey is voluntary and confidential.
- Your decision to participate will not affect any dealings you may have with VAC or the Government of Canada, now or in the future.
- The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.
- To validate the legitimacy of the survey, you may contact the Project Authority, Julia Pike, Senior Operations Manager, Online Systems and Solutions, at 782-377-2580 or email: julia.pike@veterans.gc.ca

What about your personal information?

- Please be assured that all responses will remain anonymous and will not be attributed to you personally in any way. VAC will not receive your name or contact information.
- Your responses will remain anonymous and the information you provide will be administered according to the requirements of the *Privacy Act*, the *Access to Information Act*, and any other pertinent legislation.
- Your responses will be collected by Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (SPI), a Canadian research firm in accordance with the applicable provincial privacy legislation or the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). Click to view Phoenix SPI's privacy policy.

What happens after the online survey?

A final report summarizing the results of the survey will be written by Phoenix SPI. The report will be available to the public through Library and Archives Canada (www.bac-lac.gc.ca/).

If you have any questions about the survey other than verifying its legitimacy, you may contact Phoenix SPI at research@phoenixspi.ca.

Your help is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to receiving your feedback.

Page 3: Reminders

One question will appear on each screen. After selecting your answer, click on the "Next" button at the bottom of the screen to move forward in the survey. You need to complete the survey in one session. If you leave the survey before completing it, you will need to start over.

In order to protect your identity, please do not enter any information that could identify you or anyone else when responding to questions.

PROGRAMMING NOTES:
ALL SURVEY QUESTIONS TO BE PRESENTED 1 QUESTION PER PAGE UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED.
SECTION TITLES SHOULD NOT APPEAR ON SCREEN FOR RESPONDENTS.
DO NOT PRESENT QUESTION NUMBERS.
INCLUDE A PROGRESS BAR.
ALL QUESTIONS ARE MANDATORY.
ADD A CHARACTER LIMIT FOR ANY OPEN DATA AND FOLLOW THE TEXT BOX WITH: Please do not enter any information that could identify you or anyone else when responding to questions.

Survey questions

My VAC Account Use

1. Are you a registered user of My VAC Account?

   01. Yes
   02. No [THANK AND TERMINATE]
   03. I don’t know [THANK AND TERMINATE]
   04. I prefer not to say [THANK AND TERMINATE]

2. Have you used My VAC Account in the past 12 months?

   01. Yes
   02. No [SKIP TO Q4]

3. [IF Q2=01] On average, how often would you say you use My VAC Account?

   01. At least once a day
   02. Several times a week
   03. About once a week
   04. About once a month
   05. Less than once a month
   06. I don’t know
   07. I prefer not to say

4. What type of device do you use most often to access My VAC Account?

01. Desktop or laptop computer
02. Tablet (e.g., iPad, Samsung Galaxy Tab)
03. Mobile phone (e.g., iPhone, Samsung Galaxy, Google Pixel)
04. I don't know

5. Which operating system is running on the device you use most often to access My VAC Account?

01. Microsoft Windows
02. macOS (Apple/Mac computers)
03. iOS (iPhone/iPad)
04. Android (e.g., Samsung/Google/Chromebook)
05. Linux
06. I can't recall/I don't know

6. How did you first learn about My VAC Account?

01. Word of mouth (e.g., from a friend or colleague)
02. VAC staff member
03. Browsing the VAC website
04. Social media
05. Veterans' organization or event
06. Information received from VAC
07. The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)
08. Another government department/office
09. Other - Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*
10. I can't recall
11. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

7. Which of the following features have you accessed in My VAC Account?

Select all that apply

01. Applying online for VAC benefits and services.
02. Uploading documents to support your application(s).
03. Tracking the status of your application(s).
04. Viewing a summary of your benefits.
05. Signing up for direct deposit or changing your banking information.
06. Communicating with VAC staff through secure messaging.
07. Communicating with the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA).
08. Communicating with the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB).
09. Receiving correspondence from VAC in your My VAC Account inbox.
10. Updating your personal information.
11. Changing your communications preferences (e.g., go paperless).
12. Using the benefits navigator.
13. Using the member transition task list.
14. Using my well-being check-in.
15. I can't recall

Registration

These next questions are about the registration process for My VAC Account.

8. When you registered for My VAC Account, which of the following did you use?

   01. GCKey
   02. Sign-in partner (banking login information) [SKIP TO Q11]
   03. I can't recall [SKIP TO Q14]
   04. I prefer not to say [SKIP TO Q14]

9. [IF Q8=01] How easy or difficult was the GCKey two-factor authentication (2FA) process?

   01. Very difficult
   02. Somewhat difficult
   03. Somewhat easy
   04. Very easy
   05. I can't recall

10. As part of the two-factor login process, one-time authentication codes are sent to you via email or an app on your phone. If an option to receive these codes via text message was available, would you prefer that method?

    01. Yes, I would prefer to receive one-time codes via text message.
    02. No, I prefer to continue receiving one-time codes via my current method.
    03. I have no preference.

11. Overall, how easy or difficult was the process to register for My VAC Account?

    01. Very difficult
    02. Somewhat difficult
    03. Somewhat easy
    04. Very easy
    05. I can't recall

12. [IF Q11=01, 02] Why was it was difficult to register for My VAC Account?

    Select all that apply

    01. It took too long.
    02. There were too many steps.
    03. I didn't know what a GCKey was.
    04. I couldn't complete the GCKey two-factor authentication (2FA) process.
    05. I had trouble linking my Veteran Affairs Canada file to my account.
    06. Other - Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*
    07. I can't recall

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The steps required to register for My VAC Account justify the security it provides."

01. Strongly disagree
02. Disagree
03. Neither disagree nor agree
04. Agree
05. Strongly agree
06. I don't know

Contact with VAC / Secure Messaging

14. In the past 12 months, have you tried contacting VAC through secure messaging?

    01. Yes
    02. No [SKIP TO COMMUNICATIONS SECTION]
    03. I can't recall [SKIP TO COMMUNICATIONS SECTION]
    04. I prefer not to say [SKIP TO COMMUNICATIONS SECTION]

15. [IF Q14=01] Approximately how many times have you connected directly with VAC staff through secure messaging in the past 12 months?

    01. Once
    02. Twice
    03. 3 to 4 times
    04. 5 to 9 times
    05. 10 times or more
    06. Other – Please specify [TEXT BOX]*
    07. I can't recall
    08. I haven't connected [SKIP TO Q21]
    09. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

16. [IF Q15≠08] On average, how long did you wait to receive a response when you connected directly with VAC staff through secure messaging?

    01. Less than one business day
    02. 1-2 business days
    03. 3-5 business days
    04. More than 5 business days
    05. I can't recall
    06. I prefer not to say

17. [IF Q15≠08] How long did you expect to wait for a secure message reply?

    01. Less than one business day
    02. 1-2 business days
    03. 3-5 business days
    04. More than 5 business days
    05. I had no expectations
    06. I don't know
    07. I prefer not to say

18. [IF Q15≠08] How satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with your experience using secure messaging to connect directly with VAC staff in the past 12 months?

    01. Very dissatisfied
    02. Dissatisfied
    03. Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
    04. Satisfied
    05. Very satisfied
    06. I don't know
    07. I prefer not to say

19. [IF Q15≠08] In the past 12 months, did you have any difficulties using secure messaging?

    01. Yes
    02. No [SKIP TO Q21]
    03. I can't recall [SKIP TO Q21]
    04. I prefer not to say [SKIP TO Q21]

20. [IF Q19=01] What difficulties did you experience?

    Select all that apply

    01. It took too long for a response.
    02. I wanted a secure message reply but received a call back instead.
    03. My issue wasn't resolved.
    04. I didn't know where to send my message (i.e., VAC, BPA, VRAB).
    05. Other – Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*
    06. I can't recall
    07. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

21. Do you have any suggestions to help improve secure messaging?

    01. [OPEN TEXT]*
    02. No suggestions

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

Communications

22. What topics are you interested in reading about in the news and notifications section of My VAC Account?

    Select all that apply

    01. Commemorative events and related news
    02. New program and services
    03. Changes to benefits
    04. Updates to My VAC Account and new features
    05. Mental health information and services

06. Available surveys
07. Other – Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*
08. I don't know
09. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

"Track your applications"

23. [IF Q7≠03] Earlier you indicated that you haven't used the "Track your applications" feature in My VAC Account to view the status of your application(s). Why is that?

    01. I did not know about it.
    02. I did not need to use it.
    03. It seemed complicated to use.
    04. Other – Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*
    05. I did track the status of my application(s).
    06. I don't know
    07. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

24. [IF Q7=03] Earlier you indicated that you used the "Track your applications" feature in My VAC Account. Did "Track your applications" help you find out the status of your application?

    01. No
    02. In part/somewhat
    03. Yes [SKIP TO Q26]
    04. I can't recall [SKIP TO Q26]
    05. I prefer not to say [SKIP TO Q26]

25. [If Q24=01, 02] Why did you say that the "Track your applications" feature did not help you find out the status of your application?

    01. [OPEN TEXT]*
    02. I don't know

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

26. What other information about the status of your application would you like the "Track your applications" feature to provide?

    01. [OPEN TEXT]*
    02. No suggestions

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

Overall Assessments of My VAC Account

Thinking about all the times you have used My VAC Account over the past year:

27. Which of the following best describes your experience accessing information when you visited My VAC Account?

    01. I generally found everything I needed. [SKIP TO Q29]
    02. I generally found most of what I needed. [SKIP TO Q29]
    03. I generally found some of what I needed.
    04. I generally found nothing I needed.
    05. I can't recall [SKIP TO Q29]
    06. I prefer not to say [[SKIP TO Q29]

28. [IF Q27=03, 04] Why did you generally not find all the information you needed when you visited My VAC Account over the past year?

    Select all that apply

    01. My VAC Account is hard to navigate.
    02. The information in My VAC Account does not have enough detail.
    03. The information in My VAC Account is difficult to understand.
    04. My VAC Account is complicated to access.
    05. Other - Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*
    06. I don't know
    07. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

29. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the information in My VAC Account?

    a) Information in My VAC Account is easy to find.
    b) Information in My VAC Account has the right amount of detail.
    c) Information in My VAC Account includes helpful external resources.
    d) Information in My VAC Account is easy to understand.

    RESPONSE OPTIONS:

    01. Strongly disagree
    02. Disagree
    03. Neither disagree nor agree
    04. Agree
    05. Strongly agree
    06. I don't know
    07. Does not apply

30. [IF Q29 A,B,C OR D= 01 OR 02, INCLUDE A TEXT BOX]: Why did you disagree that [INSERT STATEMENT]?

    08. [OPEN TEXT]*
    09. I don't know

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

31. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

    a) My VAC Account is visually appealing.
    b) I feel that my personal information is secure in My VAC Account.
    c) I like the updates that I have seen in My VAC Account in the past year.
    d) I can do the business I need to with VAC, Bureau of Pensions Advocates, and/or Veterans Review and Appeal Board through My VAC Account.
    e) I would recommend My VAC Account to others.[5]

    RESPONSE OPTIONS:

    01. Strongly disagree
    02. Disagree
    03. Neither disagree nor agree
    04. Agree
    05. Strongly agree
    06. I don't know
    07. Does not apply

32. [IF Q31 A,B,C,D OR E= 01 OR 02, INCLUDE A TEXT BOX]: Why did you disagree that [INSERT STATEMENT]?

    08. [OPEN TEXT]*
    01. I don't know

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

33. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your experience using My VAC Account?

    01. Very dissatisfied
    02. Dissatisfied
    03. Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
    04. Satisfied
    05. Very satisfied
    06. I don't know
    07. I prefer not to say

34. [IF Q33=01 OR 02] Why are you dissatisfied with your My VAC Account experience?

    Select all that apply

    01. Features are difficult to use
    02. Minimal communication/updates from VAC
    03. Not enough details provided to find forms/specific information
    04. Lack of support/assistance
    05. Technical difficulties (e.g. it is unavailable often)
    06. Trouble finding information I need
    07. Other. Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*

[5] Only asked of respondents who completed the survey in French due to a CAWI programming error.

08. I don't know
09. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

35. What additional suggestions can you share to help Veterans Affairs Canada improve My VAC Account? This could be suggestions for new features or information to be added.

    01. [TEXT BOX]*
    02. No suggestions

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

Demographics

This last set of questions is to learn more about you and your needs. Please be assured that your answers will remain confidential and anonymous. VAC will not receive your name or contact information.

36. Are you …?

    Select all the apply

    01. a war Veteran (Second World War or Korean War)
    02. a serving member of the Canadian Armed Forces
    03. a retired member of the Canadian Armed Forces
    04. a serving member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police
    05. a retired member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police
    06. a family member who receives benefits from VAC
    07. a Power of Attorney of an individual who receives benefits from VAC
    08. I prefer not to say

37. Which gender do you identify as?

    01. Man
    02. Woman
    03. Another gender – Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*
    04. I don't know
    05. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

38. What language do you speak most often at home?

    01. English
    02. French
    03. Another language – Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*
    04. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

39. In which of the following age categories do you belong?

    01. 18-29
    02. 30-39
    03. 40-49
    04. 50-59
    05. 60-69
    06. 70-79
    07. 80 +
    08. I prefer not to say

40. Are you of First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit) descent?

    Select all that apply

    01. First Nations
    02. Métis
    03. Inuk (Inuit)
    04. No
    05. I prefer not to say

41. In which province or territory do you live?

    01. Alberta
    02. British Columbia
    03. Manitoba
    04. New Brunswick
    05. Newfoundland and Labrador
    06. Northwest Territories
    07. Nova Scotia
    08. Nunavut
    09. Ontario
    10. Prince Edward Island
    11. Quebec
    12. Saskatchewan
    13. Yukon
    14. I live outside of Canada
    15. I prefer not to say

42. [IF Q41≠14] To help us better understand how results may vary by region of the country, will you please provide the first three figures of your postal code? Your postal code will not be used to identify you.

    01. Record: [TEXT]
    02. I don’t know
    03. I prefer not to say

43. What type of internet connection do you have at home?

    01. Dial-up
    02. High speed

03. I don’t have an internet connection in my home
04. I don’t know
05. I prefer not to say

44. Finally, have you ever visited a VAC area office?

01. Yes
02. No
03. I don’t know
04. I prefer not to say

45. [IF 44=02] Why have you never visited a VAC area office?

01. I have never needed to visit a VAC office.
02. I prefer to deal with VAC online.
03. There is not a VAC office in my area.
04. Other - Please specify: [TEXT BOX]*
05. I don’t know
06. I prefer not to say

*Please do not include any names or other identifiable personal information.

Closing Page

That concludes the survey. Thank you very much for your feedback. The results will be available on the Library and Archives Canada website in the coming months.

[RE-DIRECT: https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng]

3.2 Focus Group Recruitment Screener

Landing Page

Thank you for your interest in this research study. This short online questionnaire will take no more than 5 minutes to complete. The purpose of the online questionnaire is to confirm the eligibility of individuals interested in participating in this research study.

Background information

- This research study is being conducted by Phoenix Strategic Perspectives (Phoenix SPI), a Canadian public opinion research firm, on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada.
- The research will help guide the future of My VAC Account and prioritize enhancements moving forward, so that we can improve service delivery and design.

About the focus groups

The focus groups will take place February 25, 2025, in the evening.

- The format is an online discussion with up to 8 participants led by a research professional from Phoenix SPI.
- The discussions will last up to 2 hours.
- To participate, you will need to have access to an internet-enabled device with a web camera.
- People who qualify for the research and take part will receive a cash gift to thank them for their time.

How does the online questionnaire work?

- Your decision to complete the questionnaire is completely voluntary and confidential. Your decision on whether or not to participate in the research will not affect any dealings you may have with Veterans Affairs Canada or the Government of Canada, now or in future.

What about your personal information?

- Your personal information will be collected by Phoenix SPI in accordance with the applicable provincial privacy legislation or the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).
- Please be assured that VAC will not receive your name or contact information. Should you take part in the survey, all opinions will remain anonymous and will not be attributed to you personally in any way.
- Phoenix SPI supports and strictly adheres to the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research, industry standards and guidelines for Internet and other types of research. To view Phoenix SPI's privacy policy, please click here.

Need to contact us?

For more information about this research, contact Phoenix SPI by email at research@phoenixspi.ca or by telephone at 1- 877-680-7070.

A. Eligibility

1. Do you, or does any member of your household or immediate family, work in any of the following fields?

   a) Marketing research, public relations firm, or advertising agency
   b) Advertising or the media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines, etc.)
   c) A federal or provincial government department or agency
   d) An organization working with or advocating for Canadian Veterans or members of the Canadian Armed Forces or Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

   01. Yes [THANK/TERMINATE]
   02. No

2. The focus groups are going to be online sessions held over the Internet. Participants will need to have access to a computer, a high-speed Internet connection, and a webcam to participate in the group. The webcam will need to be turned on for the duration of the session. Would you be able to participate under these conditions?
   01. Yes
   02. No
   03. Prefer not to answer [TERMINATE]

3. In which of the following age categories do you belong? [RECRUIT MIX]
   01. Under 18 [THANK/TERMINATE]
   02. 18 to 29
   03. 30 to 39
   04. 40 to 49
   05. 50 to 59
   06. 60 to 69
   07. 70 to 79
   08. 80+
   09. I prefer not to say [THANK/TERMINATE]

4. Are you…. [RECRUIT MIX]
   01. …a Veteran of the Second World War or Korean War?
   02. …a retired or still-serving member of the Canadian Armed Forces?
   03. …a retired or still-serving member of the RCMP?
   04. …a family member of a retired Canadian Veteran of the Second World War or Korean War, Canadian Armed Forces member or RCMP member?
   05. None of the above [THANK/TERMINATE]

5. Can you please confirm that you are a registered user of the My VAC Account online service?
   01. Yes
   02. No [THANK/TERMINATE]
   03. I don’t know [THANK/TERMINATE]

6. In the past year, how many times have you signed into My VAC Account? [RECRUIT MIX]
   01. One to three times [CODE AS LIGHT USERS]
   02. Four to 10 times [CODE AS MODERATE USERS]

03. More than 10 times [CODE AS HEAVY USERS]
04. I can't recall [THANK/TERMINATE]

7. Which gender do you identify as?
01. Man
02. Woman
03. Another gender – Please specify: [TEXT BOX]
04. I prefer not to say

8. What language do you speak most often at home?
Select all that apply

01. English
02. French
03. Other
04. I prefer not to say

9. Are your First Nations, Métis, or Inuk (Inuit)?
Select all that apply

01. No, not an Indigenous person
02. Yes, First Nations [CODE AS INDIGENOUS]
03. Yes, Métis [CODE AS INDIGENOUS]
04. Yes, Inuk (Inuit) [CODE AS INDIGENOUS]
05. Prefer not to answer

10. Do you identify…
Select all that apply

01. … with a racialized population group? Racialized groups include, among others, South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese. [CODE AS RACIALIZED]
02. … as a person with a disability? [CODE AS DISABILITY]
03. … as part of the 2SLGBTQI+ community? [CODE AS 2SLGBTQI+]
04. None of the above
05. Prefer not to answer

11. In which province or territory do you live? This information is needed to make sure you are assigned to a focus group that takes place in your time zone.
01. British Columbia
02. Alberta
03. Saskatchewan
04. Manitoba
05. Ontario
06. Quebec
07. New Brunswick
08. Nova Scotia
09. Prince Edward Island
10. Newfoundland and Labrador

11. Yukon
12. Northwest Territories
13. Nunavut
14. Prefer not to answer [TERMINATE]

B. Industry Screening and Consent

12. Have you ever attended a discussion group or taken part in an interview on any topic that was arranged in advance and for which you received money for your participation?
    01. Yes
    02. No [GO TO Q15]
    03. I can't recall [THANK/TERMINATE]

13. When did you last attend one of these discussion groups or interviews?
    04. Within the last 6 months [THANK/TERMINATE]
    05. 6 months to under 2 years
    06. 2 or more years [GO TO Q15]
    07. I can't recall [THANK/TERMINATE]

14. How many discussion groups have you attended in the past 5 years?
    01. Fewer than 5
    02. 5 or more [THANK/TERMINATE]
    03. I can't recall [THANK/TERMINATE]

15. The discussion group will be recorded. The recordings will be used only by the research professional to assist in preparing a report on the findings and they will be destroyed once the report is final. Do you agree to be recorded for research purposes only?
    01. Yes [GO TO Q17]
    02. No
    03. I prefer not to say

16. [IF Q15=02 OR 03] It is necessary for the analysis process for us to record the session as the moderator needs this material to complete the report. The recordings will be used solely to assist with writing the report and will not be shared. Now that we've explained this, do we have your permission for recording?
    01. Yes
    02. No [THANK/TERMINATE]
    03. Prefer not to answer [THANK/TERMINATE]

17. Are you comfortable expressing your views in a group setting?
    01. Very comfortable
    02. Somewhat comfortable
    03. Not very comfortable [THANK/TERMINATE]
    04. Not at all comfortable [THANK/TERMINATE]
    05. I prefer not to say [THANK/TERMINATE]

18. Representatives from Veterans Affairs Canada may observe the discussion. VAC observers will not take part in the discussion and will only hear the first names of discussion group participants. Do you agree to VAC observing the discussion?

01. Yes
02. No [THANK/TERMINATE]
03. I prefer not to say [THANK/TERMINATE]

C. Invitation to Participate

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Someone from Phoenix SPI will reach out to discuss your participation in a focus group. Please provide your name, telephone number and email address:

Name:
Telephone number:
Email address:

EXIT MESSAGE: Thank you very much for your time and willingness to participate in this research.
EXIT LINK: https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/contact-us/my-vac-account

TERMINATION MESSAGE: Thank you for your interest in participating, unfortunately you do not qualify for this study.

3.3. Moderator's Guide

Introduction (10 minutes) 5:00 PM

Introduce moderator/firm and welcome participants to the focus group.

TECHNICAL CHECK; CONFIRM SOUND AND VIDEO QUALITY.

- Thank you for attending/value your being here.
- Tonight, we're conducting research on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada.
- We'll be asking for opinion on the services available through My VAC Account.
- What you all have in common is that you are registered users of My VAC Account.
- The discussion will last approximately two hours.

Describe focus group.

- This is a "virtual round table" discussion.
- My job is to facilitate the discussion, keeping us on topic and on time.
- Your job is to offer your opinions. There are no right or wrong answers.
- I'd like to hear from everyone, so we have a range of opinions.
- I'll try to call on you, but feel free to wave if you want to contribute.

Explanations.

- Comments treated in confidence.
    - Anything you say during these groups will be held in confidence.
    - Our report summarizes the findings but does not mention anyone by name.
    - We encourage you to not provide any identifiable information about yourself.
- Your responses will in no way affect any dealings you have with the Government of Canada.
- The session is being recorded and transcribed. The recordings and transcripts remain in our possession and will not be released to anyone, even to the Government of Canada, without your written consent.
    - Recording is for report writing purposes/verify feedback.
- There are people from Veterans Affairs Canada involved in this project who will be observing tonight's online session.
    - Purpose: oversee the research process and see your reactions first-hand.
- Brief description of actions to be taken if protocol (Annex) is triggered.

Any questions?

Roundtable introduction: Let's start with everyone introducing themselves? Please tell us your first name and in which province or territory you live.

Use and Impressions of My VAC Account (20 minutes) 5:10 PM

1. I'd like to start with a general question…that is, what's your overall impression of My VAC Account? KEEP DISCUSSION HIGH LEVEL; THE FOCUS MOVES TO SERVICES & FEATURES AT THE NEXT QUESTION.

    - What are the main benefits of using My VAC Account? Why is that?
    - What are the main drawbacks of using My VAC Account? Why is that?

2. What were your overall impressions of the registration process, and can you talk about any particular challenges you faced?

    - Approximately how long did it take you to complete the registration process, and what do you think contributed to this time?
    - Do you have any suggestions on how VAC could streamline or improve the registration process?
    - Did you have any difficulties when trying to link your existing VAC information to your My VAC account? For example, getting your enrollment code from VAC?

3. How do you tend to use My VAC Account? What do you need My VAC Account for? WAIT FOR TOP-OF-MIND RESPONSES AND THEN PROMPT AS NECESSARY WITH:

    - Which services & features have you used? Which do you use the most and why?
    - What do you like about having access to these services? Is it useful? If so, why?
    - Are you able to access any of these services elsewhere? MODERATOR: THIS COULD INCLUDE CALLING VAC, VISITING A VAC OFFICE (If so, why do you access them through My VAC Account?)
    - How often do you tend to access My VAC Account?
    - What, if anything, would you not use My VAC Account for and why?

MODERATOR: NOTE ANY UNEXPECTED USES AND PROBE OR NOTE FOR LATER.

- Could you tell us more about this?
- Does anyone else use My VAC Account for these features?

4. What is the most important service or feature of My VAC Account for you? Why is that?

5. In the last year or so, have you encountered any problems using My VAC Account? If so:

    - What was the nature of the issue (speed, delays, freezes/crashes, error messages)?
    - When did this last occur and what service or feature were you using when this occurred?
    - What did you do to try to resolve the issue?
    - Were you able to resolve the issue to your satisfaction? If not, why not?

Usability (30 minutes) 5:30 PM

6. How intuitive and user-friendly do you find the visual design of My VAC Account?

- How easy is it to read the text on My VAC Account?
- Do you have any difficulty distinguishing colours used in My VAC Account? If so, which ones—can you provide an example?
- What improvements would you suggest to make the platform more appealing or easier to navigate?

7. How easy is it to find the information or features you are looking for within My VAC Account? Are there any specific areas where you feel navigation could be improved, and if so, how?

    - Overall, can you navigate the site easily?
    - Are there any parts of the site where you get stuck or find difficult to access? If so, where?
    - Have you had any accessibility issues or challenges while using My VAC Account?

8. Is the interface easy to use? Are there any specific tasks or features that you find difficult to do or use? If so, which ones? What suggestions do you have to make them more user-friendly?

    - Can you complete your tasks efficiently without confusion most times?

9. Does My VAC Account work well on your mobile or tablet devices? Have you encountered any responsiveness issues or usability challenges? If so, what were the issues or challenges, and when did you last encounter them?

    - Does My VAC Account work well across your different devices and screen sizes?
    - Have you experienced any slowdowns, error messages or other issues while using the site?
    - [IF ISSUES EXPERIENCED] How can VAC improve them to enhance your mobile/tablet experience?

10. How well does the content in My VAC Account meet your needs? Would anyone like to share specific examples of areas where the content meets or falls short of your expectations? MODERATOR: FOR EXAMPLES OF WHERE IT FALLS SHORT, ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE WHEN THEY LAST ENCOUNTERED THE ISSUE.

    - Is the content provided in My VAC Account relevant to your needs?
    - Does the content have the appropriate amount of detail?
    - Are there other topics or information you wish were included?

11. Is the information in My VAC Account clear and easy to understand? Would anyone like to share specific examples where clarity is strong or lacking? MODERATOR: FOR EXAMPLES OF WHERE IT IS LACKING, ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE WHEN THEY LAST LOOKED AT THIS INFORMATION.

    - Are there areas or sections of My VAC Account that require additional explanation?

Possible enhancements of My VAC Account (20 minutes) 6:00 PM

Looking ahead.

12. What enhancements or changes to My VAC Account would be particularly useful to you? Why is that? Anything else?

I'm now going to ask you about possible enhancements to My VAC Account. On the screen, you'll find a list of possible enhancements. Does everyone see this? Please take a minute to review the list and then we'll discuss.

SHOW ON SCREEN

- More guided web forms (i.e., special windows that walk you through the form, question-by-question, instead of traditional PDF forms)
- Ability to upload files larger then 25 megabytes
- Ability to add files and links within secure messages
- Ability to download your summary of assessment document
- Ability to receive two-factor authentication codes via a text message
- Ability to use dark mode in My VAC Account (dark background with light text, reducing screen brightness)
- Ability to filter and favourite forms listed in My VAC Account

Now let's talk about this as a group.

13. How about….[INSERT ITEMS] For how many of you is this useful? Why is this useful? Why wouldn't you use this?

14. Are there any features of other online services that you use that you would like to see incorporated in My VAC Account?

    - What are they?
    - Who provides the service?
    - What do you like about this feature?

"Track your applications" (20 minutes) 6:20 PM

Now we're going to discuss the "Track your applications" feature that can be found in My VAC Account.

MODERATOR: IF PARTICIPANTS WANT TO FOCUS ON WAIT TIMES (E.G., THE LENGTH OF TIME VAC TAKES TO ADJUDICATE BENEFIT APPLICATIONS), ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WAIT TIMES ARE AN ISSUE AND REFOCUS THE DISCUSSION ON THE STATUS TRACKING TOOL ITSELF.

15. Has anyone used the "Track your applications" feature in My VAC Account to view the status of an online application? [HAND COUNT]

For those who have NOT used the feature:

16. Did you know that you can track the status of an application in My VAC Account?

For those who have used the feature:

17. Do you find it easy to navigate? If not, why not?

    - Do the features meet your needs? What works? What doesn't work as well?
    - How important is it for you to track applications online? Why do you say that?
    - How, if at all, does knowing the status of your application help you? Any other ways?
        - If it's not helpful, why is that?

For everyone:

18. Has anyone ever needed to contact VAC for a follow-up after using the "Track your applications" feature? [HAND COUNT] Why did you need to?

    PROBES:
    - Information provided wasn't specific enough?
    - Feel application is taking too long to process?
    - Didn't know next steps?

19. For those who have contacted VAC for follow up, how did you do this? And for those who haven't, how would you prefer to contact VAC for a follow-up?

    PROMPT AS NECESSARY WITH:
    - Secure message in My VAC Account
    - Phone
    - Mail

20. What could be done to minimize the likelihood that you will feel the need to follow up?

21. Are any of you signed up for and receiving email notifications when the status of an online application changes? [HAND COUNT]

For those who are:

22. What do you think of these notifications?

    - Are they helpful? If not, why is that?
    - Do the notifications provide the right amount and type of information? If not, what's missing?
    - What additional information would you like included with the status updates?

VAC is considering a number of enhancements to the "Track your applications" feature to improve people's experience using the feature. I'm going to share them with you on the screen. Does everyone see this? Please take a minute to review the list and then we'll discuss.

SHOW ON SCREEN
- A visual indicator to show which application has been recently updated
- The ability to sort and filter your applications, keeping only in-progress or recently completed ones in the main list
- Visible dates for when each processing stage started
- A dedicated space for uploading any missing documents related to your application
- Decision letters directly linked from the "Track Your Application" page

Now let's talk about this as a group.

23. How about….[INSERT ITEMS] what impact, if any, would this enhancement have on your experience? Why is that?

24. If you could only select one enhancement for VAC to focus on, which would the most useful to you personally?

25. Do you have any (other) suggestions to help VAC make it easier for you to track applications?

MODERATOR: IF PARTICIPANTS WANT TO FOCUS ON REDUCING WAIT TIMES, ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEY ARE AN ISSUE AND REFOCUS THE DISCUSSION ON OTHER SUGGESTIONS.

26. What additional features, information, or resources would you like to see added to "Track your applications" to improve your experience and meet your needs more effectively?

Conclusion 6:40 PM

[TIME PERMITTING] We're nearing the end of the discussion. I have a few final questions for you:

27. How well does VAC keep you informed about programs and services through My VAC Account?
    - What specific types of information would you like to learn about through My VAC Account?
    - Do you subscribe to the other sources of information from VAC, for example VAC's monthly e-newsletter, "Salute!"

Those are all the questions I have. Is there anything you would like to add? Do you have any last comments or suggestions about anything we have discussed tonight?

On behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada, I would like to thank you for your time and participation today.

You can all log out now. Have a great evening!

Annex: Protocol for potential situation where Veteran becomes upset/distraught during the interview

- Listen for verbal cues that might indicate frustration, irritation, anxiety, or sadness - affect, tone, language.

- Tell them clearly that what you hear/sense and see if this is correct with the Veteran's perspective. (i.e. I sense that you are getting confused/upset/frustrated)

- Note that these are sensitive questions and ask if they would like to postpone the rest of the interview until a later time. If so, try to book for a time within the next 2 days.

- If they have established that they are upset, or have other questions about their file/situation, you can ask them if they would like you to get in touch with their case manager to follow-up with them.

- Provide the VAC Assistance Service phone number and note that it is available 24/7. It is available by calling: **1-800-268-7708;** the TDD/TTY number is**: 1-800-567-5803**.

- This service is one of the first and most immediately accessible lines of help for mental health or personal difficulties that a Veteran, former RCMP member, family member, or caregiver is experiencing. It provides up to 20 hours of psychological support for any given issue they may be facing. The external webpage for the VAC Assistance Service is: https://veterans.gc.ca/en/contact-us/talk-mental-health-professional

- Offer the Project Authority's contact info [INSERT cell and email].

- Let them know you plan to follow-up with them regardless to see how they are doing

Mandatory reporting:

In situations where there are reasonable or probable grounds to suspect abuse, or potential self-harm or harm to others, the business process *Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse, Potential Self-harm or Harm to Others,* will be followed.