

VA Home Loan Guide

Use your home-loan benefit with
confidence



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Eligibility and Your COE

Who can use a VA loan? Eligible Veterans, service members, certain National Guard and Reserve members, and some surviving spouses may qualify. A Certificate of Eligibility confirms benefit eligibility, not final loan approval.

- Your lender may obtain the COE electronically
- Service history determines basic eligibility
- Income, credit, debts, assets, and property still matter
- VA guarantees part of a private lender's loan

Start with the COE and a documented preapproval before serious home shopping.



**YOU'RE
PRE-APPROVED**

Zero Down, Credit, and Income

Is a down payment required?

Often no, when the Veteran has sufficient entitlement and the purchase price does not exceed the appraised value. A down payment may still help with pricing, the funding fee, entitlement, or a value shortage.

- VA does not set a universal minimum credit score
- Lenders may set their own score requirements
- Stable, documentable income is required
- Residual income measures money left after major obligations

Zero down does not mean zero cash. Budget for inspections, earnest money, and other costs.





Funding Fee and Closing Costs

What does a VA loan cost?

VA loans do not require monthly mortgage insurance. Many borrowers pay a one-time VA funding fee. The amount depends on loan type, down payment, prior use, and exemption status, and it may usually be financed.

- Some Veterans and surviving spouses are exempt
- The seller or lender may pay eligible costs within VA rules
- Discount points and credits change rate and cash needs
- Review the Loan Estimate, APR, and complete payment

Confirm exemption status before closing. A later disability award may create refund questions.

VA Appraisal and Inspection

What does the VA appraisal do?

The VA appraisal supports value and reviews Minimum Property Requirements. It is not a home inspection and does not guarantee the home's condition. Buyers should consider an independent inspection.

- The home must be safe, sanitary, and structurally sound
- Access, utilities, water, sewage, and hazards can matter
- Repairs may be required before guaranty
- A low value can trigger reconsideration or contract choices

Discuss property concerns early. The VA appraisal protects the program, not every buyer preference.



Entitlement and Loan Limits

Can I reuse my VA benefit?

Yes, entitlement may be restored and reused when VA requirements are met. Veterans with full entitlement generally do not have a VA loan limit, though the lender still approves the loan amount.

- Remaining entitlement may support another VA loan
- Partial entitlement can affect required down payment
- Restoration rules depend on the prior loan and property
- A VA loan may be assumable by a qualified buyer

An assumption does not automatically restore the seller's entitlement. Review release and substitution carefully.





Eligible Homes and Occupancy

What can a VA loan finance?

VA purchase loans are intended for the borrower's primary residence. Eligible homes may include one-to-four-unit properties, approved condominiums, manufactured homes, and some new construction.

- The Veteran generally must certify intent to occupy
- Multi-unit buyers must occupy one unit
- Condos require VA project eligibility
- Manufactured homes and new construction need added review

VA purchase financing is not for a vacation home or a non-owner-occupied investment property.

VA Process and Documents

What happens from COE to closing?

The lender verifies eligibility and the financial file, then reviews the contract, title, insurance, VA appraisal, and underwriting conditions. VA does not make the lending decision or guarantee the property.

- COE and service documents when needed
- Photo ID, income, employment, and asset records
- Disability, retirement, BAH, or other income support
- Contract, insurance, title, and property documents
- Explanations for credit events or large deposits

Keep the lender informed about deployments, job changes, new debt, and money movement.



Use the Benefit Wisely

What should I compare?

Compare rate, APR, points, credits, funding fee, cash to close, full monthly payment, and long-term cost. A VA loan is powerful, but the best structure depends on the Veteran, property, and plans.

- Verify COE and entitlement
- Confirm funding-fee exemption status
- Review residual income and complete payment
- Compare offers using identical assumptions

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