

10 VA letters

**Week 1: Pre-notification Letter- Everyone receives the same letter**

Date

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Sir or Madam:

In a few days, you will receive in the mail a request to fill out a short questionnaire for a national research study being conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The questionnaire will ask whether there are any Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or surviving spouses of deceased Veterans currently living in your household.

This study is part of the National Survey of Veterans. We are conducting this study to collect up-to-date information about Veterans, their spouses, and survivors. We urge you to fill out the questionnaire even if you are not a Veteran, spouse, or survivor. We ask that a responsible adult in your household fill out the questionnaire. Your participation in this important study will help improve VA's ability to provide the best benefits and services to Veterans and their families. Your participation is voluntary.

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Gorenflo

## **Week 2: First Request – include a paper questionnaire**

Date

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to encourage you to take part in a significant study being conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We ask that you fill out the enclosed short questionnaire that asks if there are any Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or surviving spouses of deceased Veterans living in your household. If there are no Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or surviving spouses in your household, please let us know by returning the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. This way we can delete your household from the next stage of the study.

This questionnaire is part of the National Survey of Veterans. The results of the survey will be used by VA to determine Veterans', their spouses', and their survivors' levels of awareness of benefits and services, and whether they know how to access those benefits and services. Once you return the enclosed questionnaire, we will ask eligible individuals to complete a second questionnaire that covers topics including health, medical care, housing, and education.

Your household was selected to provide up-to-date information about Veterans, their spouses and survivors in the United States. Your answers will be kept confidential and are protected under current laws and regulations, including the Privacy Act of 1974. Your participation is voluntary.

VA selected an independent contractor, Westat, to conduct the study. The back of this letter provides answers to some commonly asked questions about the study. If you have further questions, please call Westat at **1-888-678-2009**.

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Gorenflo  
**Week 2: First Request – include a web address questionnaire**

Date

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to encourage you to take part in a significant study being conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We ask that you fill out a short computerized questionnaire that asks if there are any Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or surviving spouses of deceased Veterans living in your household. If there are no Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or surviving spouses in your household, please let us know by submitting the computerized questionnaire. This way we can delete your household from the next stage of the study.

The computerized questionnaire can be found at: <http://XXXXXXXXXX> and enter "XXXXX" as your password. If you are unable to access the Internet, please call Westat at the number below and we will mail you a paper questionnaire.

This questionnaire is part of the National Survey of Veterans. The results of the survey will be used by VA to determine Veterans', their spouses', and their survivors' levels of awareness of benefits and services, and whether they know how to access those benefits and services. Once you submit the questionnaire, we will ask eligible individuals to complete a second questionnaire that covers topics including health, medical care, housing, and education.

Your household was selected to provide up-to-date information about Veterans, their spouses and survivors in the United States. Your answers will be kept confidential and are protected under current laws and regulations, including the Privacy Act of 1974. Your participation is voluntary.

VA selected an independent contractor, Westat, to conduct the study. The back of this letter provides answers to some commonly asked questions about the study. If you have further questions, please call Westat at **1-888-678-2009**.

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Gorenflo

**Week 4: Second Request for a paper questionnaire**

Date

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Sir or Madam:

About three weeks ago, Westat, a contractor for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) sent a questionnaire asking about any military Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or surviving spouses of deceased Veterans living in your household. To date, we have not received the questionnaire. We hope you will consider participating in this survey.

Your participation on the National Survey of Veterans is important for collecting the most accurate and up-to-date information about Veterans, their spouses, and survivors.

If there are no Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or survivors in your household, it is still important that you complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed envelope. This way we can delete your household from the next stage of the study.

Your answers will be kept confidential and are protected under current laws and regulations, including the Privacy Act of 1974. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

The back of this letter provides answers to some commonly asked questions about the study. If you have further questions, please call Westat at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009).

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Gorenflo

**Week 4: Second Request - include a paper questionnaire**

Date

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Sir or Madam:

About three weeks ago, Westat, a contractor for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) sent a questionnaire asking about whether there were any military Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or surviving spouses of deceased Veterans living in your household. To date, we have not received the questionnaire. We hope you will consider participating in this survey.

Your participation on the National Survey of Veterans is important for collecting the most accurate and up-to-date information about Veterans, their spouses, and survivors.

We have enclosed a paper questionnaire that you can return in the postage paid envelope. If you would prefer to complete the questionnaire on the Internet, the questionnaire can be found at: <http://XXXXXXXXXX> and enter "XXXXX" as your password.

If there are no Veterans, spouses of Veterans or survivors in your household, it is still important that you complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed envelope. This way we can delete your household from the next stage of the study.

Your answers will be kept confidential and are protected under current laws and regulations, including the Privacy Act of 1974. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

The back of this letter provides answers to some commonly asked questions about the study. If you have further questions, please call Westat at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009).

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Gorenflo

**Week 1 First Request to do Extended Interview, paper questionnaire**

Date

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Veteran:

I am writing to request your help with the National Survey of Veterans. By filling out the enclosed questionnaire, you will help us collect up-to-date information on Veterans' military background and experience. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will use the results to determine the level of awareness Veterans have of VA benefits and services and whether Veterans know how to access those benefits and services.

You were identified as a military Veteran from a prior inquiry to your household. Because you are among a small number of individuals who were selected, your response is crucial for providing a complete picture of Veterans across the country. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

Your answers to the questionnaire will be kept confidential and are protected under current laws and regulations, including the Privacy Act of 1974. VA selected an independent contractor, Westat, to conduct the study.

The questions should take approximately 10 minutes. If you have further questions, please call Westat at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009).

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Gorenflo

**Week 1 First Request to do Extended Interview, web questionnaire, e-mail**

From: Westat  
Sent: March, XX, 2009  
To: Veteran

Subject: National Survey of Veterans, Department of Veterans Affairs

March XX 2009

I am writing to request your help with the National Survey of Veterans. By filling out the questionnaire described below, you will help us collect up-to-date information on Veterans' military background and experience. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will use the results to determine the level of awareness Veterans have of VA benefits and services and whether Veterans know how to access those benefits and services.

You were identified as a Veteran from a prior inquiry to your household. Because you are among a small number of individuals who were selected, your response is crucial for providing a complete picture of Veterans across the country. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

Your answers to the questionnaire will be kept confidential and are protected under current laws and regulations, including the Privacy Act of 1974. VA selected an independent contractor, Westat, to conduct the study.

From our last contact with your household, our understanding is that you would prefer to complete the questionnaire over the Internet. In order to do this, please click on the link below to go to the questionnaire website (or copy and paste the questionnaire link into your Internet browser).

Questionnaire **Link:** XXXXXXXXXXXXX

The questions should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If you have further questions, please call Westat at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009).

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,



Mark Gorenflo

**Week 1 First Request to do Extended Interview, web questionnaire, letter**

Date

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Veteran:

I am writing to request your help with the National Survey of Veterans. By filling out the questionnaire described below, you will help us collect up-to-date information on Veterans' military background and experience. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will use the results to determine the level of awareness Veterans have of VA benefits and services and whether Veterans know how to access those benefits and services.

You were identified as a Veteran from a prior inquiry to your household. Because you are among a small number of individuals who were selected, your response is crucial for providing a complete picture of Veterans across the country. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

Your answers to the questionnaire will be kept confidential and are protected under current laws and regulations, including the Privacy Act of 1974. VA selected an independent contractor, Westat, to conduct the study.

From our last contact with your household, it is our understanding that you would prefer to complete the questionnaire over the Internet. The computerized questionnaire can be found at: <http://XXXXXXXXXX> and enter "XXXXXX" as your password.

The questions should take approximately 10 minutes. If you have further questions, please call Westat at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009).

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Gorenflo

**Week 3 Second request to do Extended Interview, paper questionnaire**

Date

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Veteran:

About three weeks ago, you were sent a questionnaire that asked about the services and benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). If you have already completed the questionnaire, we appreciate your participation. If you have not completed it, we urge you to do so.

The results of the survey will be used by VA to determine Veterans' levels of awareness of benefits and services, and whether they know how to access those benefits and services. You are among a small number of individuals who have been selected to represent other Veterans like yourself. It is only by hearing from a large number of Veterans across the entire country that the study can be accurately completed.

The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes. The information that you provide will be kept confidential and is protected under current laws and regulations, including the Privacy Act of 1974. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

If you decide not to participate, please let us know by returning a note or blank questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. If you have questions, please call Westat at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009).

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Gorenflo

**Week 3 Second request to do Extended Interview, web or on paper, letter**

Date

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Veteran:

About three weeks ago, you were sent a questionnaire that asked about the services and benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). If you have already completed the questionnaire, we appreciate your participation. If you have not completed it, we urge you to do so.

The results of the survey will be used by VA to determine Veterans' levels of awareness of benefits and services, and whether they know how to access those benefits and services. You are among a small number of individuals who have been selected to represent other Veterans like yourself. It is only by hearing from a large number of Veterans across the entire country that the study can be accurately completed.

The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes. The information that you provide will be kept confidential and is protected under current laws and regulations, including the Privacy Act of 1974. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

From our last contact with your household, it is our understanding you would prefer to complete the questionnaire over the Internet. The questionnaire can be found at: <http://XXXXXXXXXX> and enter "XXXXX" as your password. If you would prefer to mail back a questionnaire, we have enclosed the questionnaire along with a postage paid return envelope.

If you decide not to participate, please let us know by returning a note or blank questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. If you have questions, please call Westat at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009).

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Gorenflo  
Q & A on back of request letters

### Commonly Asked Questions

Why do you need my location? Doesn't the VA know where all Veterans are?

The VA does have location information on many Veterans, spouses of Veterans, and surviving spouses of deceased Veterans. There are many individuals for whom the VA does not have this information.

Why didn't you address the letter to me? Don't you have my name?

For many Veterans, the VA does not have their names. For those where the VA does have a name, the contact information may not be up-to-date. For this reason, the letters were not personalized.

What is involved with doing the study?

Participation in the study consists of two stages. In the first stage, we ask that someone in your household fill out a short questionnaire that asks if there are any Veterans, spouses of Veterans or surviving spouses of Veterans who live at the address. This will provide us with a listing of the Veterans, their spouses, and survivors at the addresses included in the study. In the second stage, we will send a longer questionnaire to those Veterans who were identified in the first stage.

What type of information will be collected?

The questionnaire sent at the first stage asks if there are any Veterans, spouses of Veterans or surviving spouses of Veterans. If there are any of these individuals, we ask how many of each of these groups live at the address.

The questionnaire sent at the second stage will collect information from Veterans of all services and service periods. The questionnaire will ask about the Veterans' military background and experience. This study is designed to collect information about the level of awareness Veterans have of VA benefits and services and whether Veterans know how to access those benefits and services.

Should I identify Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or surviving spouses of deceased Veterans who do not live at my address?

No, you should only list individuals who live at the address that received our survey request.

If there are no Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or surviving spouses of deceased Veterans in my household, should I respond?

Yes, you should respond to the short questionnaire that was sent to your address. Once you return the questionnaire, the study will be able to rule out your household as one that does not contain eligible individuals.

## 4 Contractor Letters

**Week 3 Reminder Postcard, paper questionnaire**



An Employee-Owned  
Research Corporation

1650 Research Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20850-3195  
tel: 301-251-1500  
fax: 301-294-2040  
[www.westat.com](http://www.westat.com)

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

DATE

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently asked you to complete a questionnaire.

If you have already completed the questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please have an adult member of your household do so at your earliest convenience. We very much appreciate your help with this important survey administered by the VA.

If you did not receive a questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please call Westat's toll-free number at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009) and we will send another one in the mail to you today.

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

John Helmick, Project Director, National Survey of Veterans

**Week 3 Reminder Postcard, web questionnaire**



An Employee-Owned  
Research Corporation

1650 Research Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20850-3195  
tel: 301-251-1500  
fax: 301-294-2040  
[www.westat.com](http://www.westat.com)

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

DATE

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently asked you to complete a questionnaire on the Internet.

If you have already completed the questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If you are able to complete the questionnaire on the Internet, please do so at your earliest convenience. If you are unable to access the Internet or would prefer to fill out a paper version, we will mail the questionnaire to households that have not returned the questionnaire in approximately 2 weeks. If you would like to get a paper copy sooner, please call Westat at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009). We very much appreciate your help with this important survey administered by the VA.

Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

John Helmick, Project Director, National Survey of Veterans

**Week 2 Reminder Postcard to do Extended Interview, paper questionnaire**



An Employee-Owned  
Research Corporation

1650 Research Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20850-3195  
tel: 301-251-1500  
fax: 301-294-2040  
[www.westat.com](http://www.westat.com)

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240



DATE

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently asked you to complete a questionnaire that covers topics including Veteran's health, medical care, housing, and education. If the questionnaire has already been completed and returned, please accept our sincere thanks. If you haven't completed it, please do so at your earliest convenience.

If you did not receive a questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please call Westat's toll-free number at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009) and we will send another one in the mail to you today.

We very much appreciate your help on this important study. Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

John Helmick, Project Director, National Survey of Veteran's

**Week 2 Reminder Postcard to do Extended Interview, web questionnaire**



An Employee-Owned  
Research Corporation

1650 Research Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20850-3195  
tel: 301-251-1500  
fax: 301-294-2040  
[www.westat.com](http://www.westat.com)

The Family residing at  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20240

DATE

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently asked you to complete a computerized questionnaire that covers topics including Veteran's health, medical care, housing, and education. If you have already completed the questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If you haven't completed it, please do so at your earliest convenience.

If you are unable to access the Internet or would prefer to fill out a paper questionnaire, we will be mailing a paper version to households that have not returned the questionnaire in approximately 2 weeks. If you would like to get a paper copy sooner, please call Westat at **1-888-NSV-2009** (1-888-678-2009).

We very much appreciate your help on this important survey about the benefits and services administered by the VA. Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,

John Helmick, Project Director, National Survey of Veteran's

# Detailed Implementation

# Information

## **Design Pilot Study Communication Plan**

The households will be randomly assigned to one of the following two groups:

### **Group 1**

This group will receive an initial request to fill out the paper version of the questionnaire. If this group does not respond, they will receive a second request that includes a paper version of the instrument, as well as an option to fill it out on the web. This group will receive letters on a one week interval as follows:

Week 1: Pre-notification Letter- Everyone receives the same letter

Week 2: First Request – Include a paper questionnaire

Week 3: Reminder Postcard – For the paper questionnaire

Week 4: Second Request – For a paper questionnaire

### **Group 2**

This group will receive an initial request to fill out the questionnaire on the web. If this group does not respond, they will receive a second request that includes the paper version of the instrument, asking them to fill this out. This group will receive letters on a one week interval as follows:

Week 1: Pre-notification Letter- Everyone receives the same letter

Week 2: First Request – Include a web address for questionnaire

Week 3: Reminder Postcard – For the web questionnaire

Week 4: Second Request - Include a paper questionnaire

### **Letters for Extended Interviews - Design Pilot Study Communication Plan**

The enclosed package contains the communication letters for the extended interviews to be conducted as part of the pilot survey for the National Survey of Veterans.

The letters are directed to the Veteran that was previously identified by the screening questionnaire. There will be two groups that will get these letters.

#### **Group 1**

This group will be those that indicated on the screener they would prefer to complete the questionnaire using a paper and pencil instrument. This group will receive letters on a one week interval as follows:

Week 1: First Request – paper questionnaire

Week 2: Reminder Postcard – paper questionnaire

Week 3: Second Request – paper questionnaire

**Group 2**

This group will be those that indicated they would prefer to complete the questionnaire on the internet. This group will get both letters and e-mails. In the first mailing, we will simultaneously send both a letter and an e-mail. Subsequent communication will be by letters. In the last request, a paper questionnaire will be included. This group will receive letters on a one week interval as follows:

Week 1: First Request – web questionnaire - letter

Week 1: First Request – web questionnaire – e-mail request

Week 2: Reminder Postcard – web questionnaire

Week 3: Second Request – web or paper questionnaire - letter