

NYS Department of Veterans' Services to Host Free Virtual Program on Maximizing VA Home Loan Benefits

August 19 Event Will Help Veterans Better Understand and Access VA Home Loan Benefits, Homeownership & Opportunities to Build Long-Term Wealth

ALBANY, NY, NY, UNITED STATES, August 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ALBANY, NY – The New York State Department of Veterans' Services ([DVS](#)) will host a free virtual conversation on August 19 designed to help Veterans, Service Members and Military Families better understand and maximize one of the most valuable benefits earned through military service: the VA Home Loan.

"Veterans Mean Business!," a special one-hour edition of DVS's successful virtual Chat & Chew series, will take place August 19 from 10 to 11 a.m. and will feature Michelle Viola Straight, Executive Director of Military Home Loan Benefits at ClearPath Mortgage Solutions, who brings more than 35 years of experience in VA housing, real estate investing, and Veteran advocacy.

The VA Home Loan program can provide eligible Veterans, Service Members and certain surviving spouses with significant advantages when purchasing, building, improving, or refinancing a home. However, misconceptions about the program and a lack of familiarity with its provisions can sometimes prevent eligible individuals from fully exploring the opportunities available to them and potentially cost them financially. DVS wants to ensure that All Who Served can fully maximize their VA Home Loan benefit.

The conversation will be hosted by DVS Special Assistant for Community Engagement Dr. Lessie Branch, an award-winning author, scholar, advocate, and U.S. Navy Veteran. The August 19



virtual program is free and open to All Who Served.

REGISTER: <https://meetny.gov.webex.com/weblink/register/r854dfb9510dfddc1168cc7938f751a08>

"Homeownership can provide stability, opportunity and a foundation for a family's financial future, and the VA Home Loan is a tremendous benefit that our Veterans and Service Members have earned through their service to our nation," said New York State Department of Veterans' Services Commissioner Dr. Viviana M. DeCohen. "At DVS, we want All Who Served and their families to know not only what benefits are available to them, but how they can use those benefits to strengthen their lives and plan for the future. I encourage Veterans, Service Members and Military Families to join us for this important conversation and take advantage of the knowledge and experience that will be shared."

"This conversation is ultimately about knowledge, access and empowerment," said DVS Special Assistant for Community Engagement Dr. Lessie Branch. "For many Veterans and Military Families, homeownership represents much more than purchasing a house. It can be an important part of building stability, creating generational wealth, and strengthening a family's financial future. We want participants to leave this Chat & Chew with practical information, greater confidence, and questions they may not have even known to ask before joining us."

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DVS Commissioner Dr. Viviana M. DeCohen

"One of the greatest challenges facing our military community isn't the lack of benefits – it's the lack of awareness about how to maximize them. As a fellow military family, I know education changes lives. I encourage every Veteran, Service Member, and Military Family to take advantage of this opportunity to learn and maximize the benefit they've earned," said Michelle Viola Straight,

Executive Director of Military Home Loan Benefits, New York State Certified Trainer & Technical Instructor on the VA Home Loan Benefit.



VETERANS MEAN BUSINESS!

Join the New York State Department of Veterans' Services for an informative conversation to help Veterans and Service Members unlock one of the most powerful benefits they've earned — the VA home loan.

**WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 19, 2026
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

*Understanding and maximizing
YOUR VA HOME LOAN BENEFIT*

Discover how to maximize your benefit, build wealth through homeownership, and make confident, informed decisions for your future.

SPECIAL GUEST
MICHELLE VIOLA-STRAIGHT
Executive Director of Military Home Loan Benefits
Clearpath Mortgage Solutions
35+ years in VA housing, real estate investing, and Veteran advocacy.

WE'LL DISCUSS:

- VA loan benefits & debunking common myths
- Building wealth through homeownership
- Success stories from Veterans like you
- Tips to avoid costly mistakes
- Benefits most Veterans don't know about

HOSTED BY
DR. LESSIE BRANCH
Special Assistant for Community Engagement,
NYS Department of Veterans' Services

Register for this event:
<https://meetny.gov.webex.com/weblink/register/r854dfb9510dfddc1168cc7938f751a08>

CHAT & CHEW | **NEW YORK STATE** | Department of Veterans' Services | **PROUD MEMBER AIME**

EVENT INFORMATION FOR MEDIA:

WHAT: Veterans Mean Business! – A Free Virtual Chat & Chew

WHEN: August 19, 2026, 10–11 a.m.

WHERE: Online via Webex

WHO: Veterans, Service Members and Military Families

COST: FREE!

REGISTER: <https://meetny-gov.webex.com/weblink/register/r854dfb9510dfddc1168cc7938f751a08>

Please note: Advance registration is strongly encouraged. Media outlets, Veterans, Service Members and Military Families throughout New York State are also encouraged to share information about the program with others who may benefit from the conversation.

About the New York State Department of Veterans' Services:

The New York State Department of Veterans' Services proudly serves New York's Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families, connecting them with benefits, services, and support. All Who Served should contact the Department at 888-838-7697 or via its website – veterans.ny.gov – to meet in-person or virtually with an accredited Veterans Benefits Advisor to receive the benefits they have earned. Follow DVS on Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, Threads, and Bluesky.

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