

VetraSpec 24.1 Release Notes



24.1 Release Notes

This is the biggest release of VetraSpec yet, and includes several of our most-requested features: custom reports, recent vets, and multi-factor authentication.

D2D and Benefits Claims (State Solutions Only)

The VA has announced their intention to sunset D2D. This release of VetraSpec introduces integration with Benefits Claims, the VA's replacement for D2D. VetraSpec will continue to support D2D until the VA shuts down the service, but users should begin transitioning to the new Benefits Claims submission mechanism as soon as possible.

All users who currently have access to D2D will automatically be given access to Benefits Claims within VetraSpec. However, to use Benefits Claims you will also need a service officer account from the VA via id.me or login.gov. You will periodically be required to sign into this account *in addition to your normal VetraSpec account*. Please contact the VA if you do not already have an account and are unsure how to get one.

Like D2D, Benefits claims supports the 21-22, 21-0966, and 21-526ez. It additionally supports the 21-22a. You'll be able to access Benefits Claims via the "Package This Claim" tab, just as with D2D.

VBMS Info (State Solutions Only)

This new tab will allow you to check the following veteran information from the VA:

- Status of *all* claims for a veteran, even if submitted outside of VetraSpec
- The veteran's current POA
- Any established ITFs for the veteran

As with benefits claims submissions, this will require an id.me or login.gov account to use. With the exception of the "Current POA" function, these function will also require you to have POA for the veteran.

Custom Report Builder (Paid Module)

VetraSpec now offers the ability for users to build and run their own custom reports. This permission is available only to level 8 users for state solutions, or level 7 users for county solutions. Custom reports are visible only to the user that created the report. Additional details are provided in the *VetraSpec Custom Report Guide* provided.

New "My Vets" Page

The functionality of the "My Vets" page has been greatly improved. Initially, it will show you a list of your most recently accessed veteran records. There are also three additional views: "Assigned to Me", "Active", and "Archived". The "Assigned to me" tab will show all your vets, just as the original "My Vets" page. The other two tabs will show you veterans with their record status set to "Active" and "Archived" respectively. This will allow you to narrow your view, for example, to only show veterans you are actively working with.

If there are more than one hundred vets in the view, then "My Vets" will paginate by veteran last name.



Multi-Factor Authentication

VetraSpec now supports the following methods for multi-factor authentication:

- Email
- Authenticator apps (such as Google Authenticator)

MFA is optional (but highly recommended) for users on county solutions. For users on state solutions, MFA is required, and will be used in place of your security question. Please use the control panel to set up one or more MFA methods.

Once set up, multi-factor authentication will be required for your first login each day. For your convenience, an optional “fast renewal” option exists. If selected, when your session expires but has been expired for a few hours or less, you will only be prompted to for either your password or another factor to renew your session; you will not be required to provide both.

Report Sorting

Users can now change the sort order of many of the built-in reports using the arrow buttons at the tops of the columns. Sorting is currently enabled only for a subset of all reports, and only for certain columns within those reports. See [Appendix A: Sortable Reports](#) for additional details.

General Contact Log

You are now able to capture phone and email information in general communications. You can also create follow-up tasks to associate with the communication, which will show up on your homepage similar to pending issues.

Combined Ratings and the Bilateral Factor

VetraSpec’s combined rating calculation has been updated to take into consideration the exception recently added in the CFR (§ 4.26 ¶ d). When it is determined that a veteran’s combined rating could be increased by excluding some ratings from the bilateral factor, VetraSpec will do so. You will see a banner on the current ratings page informing you when this is the case.

For more information regarding this regulation change, see the VA’s announcement here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/04/14/2023-07426/exceptions-to-applying-the-bilateral-factor-in-va-disability-calculations>

Accessibility

VetraSpec has undergone 508 and ADA compliance testing. Some adjustments have been made to styles, layouts, and structure to make the system more usable by those using assistive technologies. The rich text editor has also been replaced with a simpler alternative that is more compatible with screen readers.

The core application should now be fully compliant with these regulations. This compliance does not yet encompass all forms. It also does not necessarily extend to the calendar application.

- Some colors have been changed.
- Many abbreviations and acronyms have been expanded. For example, you will now tend to see “Date of Birth” instead of “DOB”.
- Screen readers will no longer announce user interface items as tables, and will read out all input labels.



- Some pages (for example, the reports page) will now automatically adjust their layout depending on your screen size, to enable easier use on small screens or high levels of zoom. A future release will extend this functionality to more pages.
- VetraSpec's text editor has been replaced with a simpler but more modern and accessibility-compliant alternative. A recent web browser is required, and JavaScript must be enabled.

Bug Fixes and Other Improvements

- If you uncheck "Is Claimant" when editing a dependent, the claimant record will now be removed. Likewise, unchecking "Is Dependent" when editing a claimant will remove the dependent record.
- Full Unicode support: You are now able to use accented letters, non-English alphabets, special symbols, emojis, and other Unicode characters in communications and notes. (While this mostly worked before, it is now officially supported.)
- The "cat" captcha has been removed.
- Numerous updates to the technologies used under the hood to power VetraSpec.
- The "Search" tab now directs to the search page instead of the home page.
- Users can now edit tasks.



Appendix A: Sortable Reports

The following reports are sortable in 24.1.0. Please note that some reports may not be visible due to client or user restrictions.

- All Pending Issues
- Closed Issues By Date
- Pending Issues By Office
- Scanned/Uploaded Documents Report
- Monthly Payments for Year
- New Records Added
- All Pending Issues
- Pending Issues By Date
- Pending Issues By Employee
- Pending Issues By Office
- Pending Issues By Status
- Retroactive amounts by Date
- Returning Veterans
- Veterans By Age
- Veterans by Conflict



Appendix B: Roadmap

The following features are planned for upcoming future releases:

1. An optional remote signatures add-on that will enable veterans to receive forms via email and sign them from home.
2. In-application signatures, without the need to first save an image to your PC.
3. Further accessibility enhancements, including an entirely new, more modern theme.
4. An optional add-on integrating with Tyler Interactive Reporting (TIR).

The following features are also on our roadmap, but have not been assigned to a particular release:

- Admins will be able to create their own new users directly, without emailing support.
- Allow confidential records to be accessed by the VSO assigned to that case, even if that VSO would not normally be able to view confidential records.

