DBK Realty LLC

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BUYER RESOURCE · MISSOURI & ILLINOIS

# Buying with a VA Loan

## *…and how we make your offer stand out*

You earned one of the best home loans available. Some sellers still have outdated ideas about VA offers. Here's what makes the VA loan so strong, the myths to set straight, and exactly how DBK presents your offer so it gets a fair look.

**$0**
down payment for eligible buyers with full entitlement

**$0**
monthly mortgage insurance (PMI), at any down payment

**4%**
of the home's value a seller can add in VA-limited concessions, on top of normal closing costs



Compliments of DBK Realty · (636) 295-0608 · hello@dbkrealty.com

THE VA ADVANTAGE

# Why your loan is a strength

The VA Home Loan Guaranty Program helps eligible veterans, service members, and certain surviving spouses buy a home. The VA guarantees part of the loan, so private lenders can offer terms most buyers can't get.

## $0 down

**No down payment**

As long as the price isn't above the appraised value and you meet the lender's requirements

## No PMI

**No mortgage insurance**

Conventional loans usually add PMI under 20% down. VA loans never do

## Reusable

**Use it again**

Bought with VA before? Your entitlement may be restored or partly available. Ask your lender to check

## Flexible

**Seller help allowed**

Sellers can pay closing costs and up to 4% more toward items like your funding fee

### The funding fee

Most VA buyers pay a one-time funding fee instead of monthly mortgage insurance. For a first-time VA purchase with less than 5% down it's 2.15% of the loan. It's lower with a down payment and higher on later use. You can pay it at closing or add it to the loan. **Veterans who receive VA disability compensation are exempt**, along with some others.

### How you qualify

The VA doesn't set a minimum credit score, but lenders do, so requirements vary from lender to lender. Lenders also look at **residual income**: the money left each month after your major expenses. You'll need a **Certificate of Eligibility (COE)**, which your lender can usually pull for you.

## Typical VA funding fee, purchase loans

| YOUR DOWN PAYMENT | FIRST USE | AFTER FIRST USE |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 5% | 2.15% | 3.30% |
| 5% to less than 10% | 1.50% | 1.50% |
| 10% or more | 1.25% | 1.25% |

*Rates as published by the VA. Your lender will confirm your exact fee and any exemption.*

## Who can use a VA loan

### Veterans

Who meet the VA's minimum service requirements

### Active duty

Service members currently serving, including PCS moves

### Guard & Reserve

Members who meet the service requirements

### Surviving spouses

Certain spouses of service members who died in service or from a service-connected disability

MYTH VS. FACT

# What sellers get wrong about VA offers

Sellers and even some listing agents pass over VA offers because of things they've heard. Most of it isn't true, and part of our job is making sure the seller hears the facts.

| MYTH | FACT |
| --- | --- |
| **"VA loans take much longer to close."** | A VA loan may take a few extra days, mostly for the appraisal, which the VA requires to be done on a set schedule for each county. Ordering the appraisal right after the offer is accepted keeps most VA purchases on a normal 30–45 day timeline. |
| **"VA appraisals are too strict."** | The appraiser checks the VA's Minimum Property Requirements: basic safety, soundness, and sanitation. Most well-kept homes pass easily. We look for likely issues during showings so they can be discussed before you ever make an offer. |
| **"Cash or conventional offers are safer."** | A VA buyer goes through the same full credit and income review as any other buyer, and part of the loan is guaranteed by the U.S. government. A pre-approved VA buyer is a qualified buyer. |
| **"If the appraisal comes in low, the deal is dead."** | The VA gives everyone time to fix it. The appraiser asks for more sales data before finishing (the "Tidewater" process), and you can request a reconsideration of value, renegotiate, or pay the difference. |
| **"The seller has to pay the VA buyer's closing costs."** | No. Any seller help is negotiated like every other term in the offer. VA buyers can pay their own closing costs, and the few lender fees the VA doesn't let veterans pay are often covered by the lender. |

**The bottom line for sellers:** a VA offer brings a fully qualified buyer with government-backed financing, and turning VA offers away shuts out a large group of serious buyers.

OUR OFFER STRATEGY

# How DBK makes your VA offer strong

A strong VA offer isn't only about price. It's about showing the seller a clean, confident deal and answering their concerns before they have them.

1. **We start with a VA-savvy lender**
   We'll connect you with loan officers who close VA loans every month, so your pre-approval is solid and the closing date is realistic.

2. **We screen homes while you tour**
   We watch for things a VA appraiser will flag, like peeling paint on older homes or signs of water damage, so there are no surprises after you're under contract.

3. **We call the listing agent first**
   Before we send your offer, we talk to the listing agent about your financing, the appraisal timeline, and your lender's track record.

4. **We send a complete package**
   Your offer goes in with a pre-approval letter written for that price, and a short summary from us explaining the terms and why your offer will close.

5. **We write clean, competitive terms**
   A firm closing date, a reasonable inspection period, and solid earnest money. In a competitive situation we may ask for fewer seller concessions, or none, so your offer reads as strong as a conventional one.

6. **We keep the deal on schedule**
   We make sure the appraisal is ordered right away and track every deadline with your lender and the title company through closing.

**SAMPLE: WHAT THE LISTING AGENT RECEIVES WITH YOUR OFFER**

| FINANCING | LENDER | APPRAISAL | CLOSING |
|---|---|---|---|
| **VA, fully pre-approved** | **Local VA specialist** | **Ordered day 1** | **Firm date, 35 days** |

*"My buyers are fully pre-approved for this price, their lender closes VA loans every month, and we've already walked the home with VA requirements in mind. Happy to answer any questions about the financing."*

★ **Stationed at Scott Air Force Base, or moving here?**
We help buyers on both sides of the river. Brian is licensed in Missouri and Illinois, so we can help you compare Metro East towns near the base with Missouri neighborhoods.

UNDER CONTRACT

# The appraisal and your protections

Once your offer is accepted, the lender orders the VA appraisal. Here's what the appraiser looks for, and the protections you have if something comes up.

## Common things a VA appraiser checks

- Roof in good shape, with no active leaks
- Safe electrical, with no exposed or loose wiring
- Working heat, and safe water and sewer service
- No signs of active water damage or standing water
- Peeling or chipping paint on homes built before 1978
- Handrails on stairs and safe access to the home

### If the value comes in low

The appraiser first asks for more sales data (the Tidewater process), and we supply it. If the value is still low, you can request a **Reconsideration of Value**, renegotiate the price, or pay the difference.

### The VA escape clause

Your contract includes a VA amendment. If the home appraises below the price, you can walk away **without losing your earnest money**, or choose to go ahead.

### If repairs are required

The seller usually makes them before closing. In some cases a repair can be waived with VA approval. We work out who does what, and when.

### Still get a home inspection

A VA appraisal is **not** an inspection. It checks minimum standards, not the full condition of the home. We always recommend your own independent inspection.

## A typical VA timeline

1. **DAY 0** — **Offer accepted**: Earnest money goes to the title company
2. **DAYS 1–3** — **Appraisal ordered**: We make sure it's requested right away
3. **DAYS 1–10** — **Inspection**: Your own inspection and repair request
4. **WEEKS 2–4** — **Appraisal & approval**: Value confirmed, any repairs done, loan approved
5. **DAYS 30–45** — **Closing**: Final walk-through, sign, and get your keys

**St. Louis tip:** many cities and St. Louis County also require an occupancy inspection when a home sells. Those repairs often overlap with the VA's list, and we'll coordinate both. See our free *Occupancy Inspection Guide*.

GET READY

# Your VA buyer checklist

## Before you shop

- [ ] Request your Certificate of Eligibility (your lender can help)
- [ ] Choose a lender with lots of VA experience
- [ ] Used VA before? Have your lender check your remaining entitlement
- [ ] Receive VA disability pay? Ask about the funding fee exemption
- [ ] Get pre-approved and set a monthly payment you're comfortable with

## Cash to plan for

- [ ] Earnest money with your offer
- [ ] Home inspection and any extra tests
- [ ] VA appraisal fee (often paid up front)
- [ ] Closing costs not covered by the seller
- [ ] Moving costs and a cushion for the first months

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

## Let's put your benefit to work.

DBK Realty helps VA buyers in Missouri and Illinois find the right home and write offers that sellers take seriously. Ask us how buyer-agent compensation works with a VA loan, too.


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## Notes from my lender

LENDER AND LOAN OFFICER _____ PHONE AND EMAIL _____

CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY RECEIVED _____ PRE-APPROVAL AMOUNT _____

FUNDING FEE (OR EXEMPT) _____ ESTIMATED MONTHLY PAYMENT _____


**Important:** This guide is general information compiled in November 2026 and is not loan, legal, or tax advice. VA program rules, funding fees, and lender requirements change and vary. Confirm eligibility, fees, and terms with your lender and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. DBK Realty is a real estate brokerage, not a lender, and is not affiliated with or endorsed by the VA. If you are currently working with another real estate agent, this is not a solicitation of that relationship.



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