



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

LGY Quarterly Buzz

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A Letter From the Executive Director

Greetings LGY Team,



John
Bell

In this new year, I wish for all of you to be richly blessed with the things that truly matter in this life.

This new year presents a fresh opportunity to examine our past and see where we want to go. That adage applies to us as individuals and for our organization as a whole. My hope is that we will continue our good work in serving Veterans and their families, but in even bigger and better ways in 2024. Every day, we are reminded of the power we have to make a difference in the lives of those who have sacrificed so much in their service to our nation. What a great mission we have, to ensure these Veterans

and their loved ones can open the door to a new home, retain their current home, or adapt a home to meet their needs!

I am equally passionate and excited about the new opportunities that this new year is bringing as we expand our reach in so many ways. We are answering the calls for help from those Veterans who are still suffering from COVID-related financial setbacks with a multi-tiered plan. Along with the foreclosure moratorium, we are extending options, like the **COVID Refund Modification**, and then planning to implement a new option, the **VA Servicing Purchase Program (VASP)**, which will kick off this spring. These much-needed efforts will keep Veterans in their homes. At some point in our lives, many of us have stumbled, and we

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needed a helping hand. I can think of no more deserving recipients of this help than Veterans, Service members, and surviving spouses.

We are expanding our reach in other ways, too. This year, we are embarking on a nationwide tour to connect with our industry partners, and I plan to include some visits with Regional Offices to listen and learn from you on those trips.

Our **Native American Direct Loan** team will be connecting with more Veterans at tribal meetings, conferences, and other forums. The **Specially Adapted Housing (SAH)** team has been meeting with Veterans and stakeholders at industry events. **Loan Production** conducted outreach to lenders and **Construction and Valuation** provided support to fee panel appraisers to ensure appraisals were timely. **Loan Administration** is working tirelessly with Veterans who were facing foreclosure, answering an enormous volume of calls about the recent pause on foreclosures. **Loan Management** has been meeting with servicers, individually and through industry organizations, to discuss home retention options for Veterans. These teams are wonderful ambassadors for LGY's programs. They serve on the frontlines, connecting personally with Veterans and stakeholders to offer critical information about LGY's programs.

In 2024, we will be listening, learning, and then adapting our programs and processes, based on what we hear as our call to action. The **All Employee Survey (AES)** feedback sessions are just one way we are using the information we hear to effect change. They identified areas for improvement, so we worked with you to create action plans. We will use those action plans to make adjustments, with the end goal of making LGY one of VA's top places to work.

I always like to take this opportunity to honor those who received Service Pins in the last quarter. Thank you for devoting your time and talents to public service and especially for your tenure here in LGY! And, for all of you in the LGY family, I just want to add, that with your dedication, we have come this far, and that gives us hope to achieve the goals we set for the future of our mission.

I am looking forward to working shoulder-to-shoulder with all of you this year!

With best regards,

John

LGY Staff Recognized for Milestone Service (1st Quarter Fiscal Year 2024)

45 Years

Margarita Mercado

40 Years

Silvia Cardenas

35 Years

Jarrell W Rial

Carolyn D Temple

Dani L Terrell

30 Years

Troy A Adams

Stephanie L Finken

25 Years

Sherry L Conley

Manuel E Del-Villar III

20 Years

Theresa M Hadi

Alfonso Patlan

Stephanie R Rose

15 Years

Vivian D Forbord

Simeon N Iroagbauba-Agbara Jr

Trenton A Kolden

Genevieve E Morris

Steven J Myers

Hang K Nguyen

Kyle J Reed

Loriann Siegfried

10 Years

Veronica I DeLorey

Jessica Blair Holland

Louis J Krejci Jr

Mike A Ortiz

Charles R Perry

Whitney V Reed

Jessica M Skidmore

Dionne A Studdard

Deane Walker-Ferebee

Kudos, LGY!

Phoenix AVO Team

Kudos to the Phoenix AVO team, led by Andrew Kopicki, Elton Andrews, and John Eidel, for flawlessly organizing the first post-pandemic in-person SAH training. Their comprehensive training covered SAH policy and best practices, legal reviews, budget training, Prosthetics, and GSA training on car usage. The team's dedication, including providing live links for remote participation, made this return to in-person training a success. Bravo!

James Heaslet

A Veteran recently wrote in to thank James Heaslet for his outstanding service. The Veteran thanked James for his expert guidance throughout the process, his calming presence, and the fact that James helped renew the Veteran's faith in VA. We are truly grateful for James' support of this Veteran and his family.

Page Dexter

Page Dexter was recently recognized by a program participant for her professionalism, prompt response, and dedicated support to the lending community. Kudos to Page for this professional support!

Prentice Davis

Kudos to Prentice Davis for going above and beyond in supporting the Monitoring Unit staff during the pandemic. He truly aided his team to navigate grief while maintaining job performance. His recognition, coaching, and assistance during times of grief deserve significant credit.



Employee Spotlight

Abdul Henderson – new Legislative Liaison, Regulation, Legislation, Engagement, Training (RLET) Team

The Buzz celebrates Abdul Henderson who boasts extensive experience in developing policy both in the private sector and in the Federal Government. He recently returned to VA as the new Legislative Liaison for RLET. Abdul oversees the “L” portion of RLET, meaning he tracks legislation that may impact LGY and provides technical support.

Previously, he served as Director of International Affairs for VA’s Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, where he handled the Department’s international engagements. He found great purpose in helping other countries establish their own Veteran services and benefits organizations.

As a combat and disabled Veteran of the Iraq War, Abdul finds a personal connection to VA’s mission. He sees the impact VA has on the Veteran community in providing health care and benefits, like that of LGY. While he may be new to LGY, he understands how critical housing is to build generational wealth and prevent Veteran homelessness, so he continuously seeks to apply his policy expertise and legislation experience. LGY’s collaborative nature and focused, mission-driven team inspires Abdul to show-up every day and show his best work to ensure LGY is the product of choice for Veterans.

Outside of his work at VA, Abdul is most proud of three things:

1. He played a pivotal role in setting the standard to develop a uniform definition of diversity throughout the Department of Defense (P.L. 110-417, Section 596). This led to successes like greater inclusion of women in special operations and more minority representation in senior ranks.
2. As an aviation enthusiast, he helped to house the retired space shuttle, Endeavor, in the California Science Center, in his hometown of Los Angeles, CA.
3. Prior to returning to VA, Abdul was the Executive Director of Mental Health America of Georgia where he was instrumental in the passage of H.B. 1013, the Mental Health Parity Act, the most comprehensive mental health reform bill in state history.



Abdul Henderson



Abdul's great grandfather in uniform



Abdul and his two sons dressed to the nines

Abdul leads a passionate life of service—serving his community, his country, and his family. He comes from a long line of Veterans on both sides of his family. Most notably, his great grandfather served in the trenches in World War I. Abdul is a proud father of two sons. He enjoys hiking and writing.

Here's to Mornings Bright and New



Author: Alvin Outarsighh, Loan Specialist – Loan Administration

Alvin is an Air Force Veteran and recently joined LGY in November 2023. He is excited to bring over 20 years of mortgage experience to VA and assist Veterans more directly in his new role. Although he is not a regular poet, Alvin enjoys trying new things and hopes to write a book one day about his unique experiences working in the medical field in the Air Force. Thank you for writing and sharing this beautiful poem Alvin and welcome to the LGY team!



*In the dawn's soft glow, we rise anew,
VA Loan Guaranty, a steadfast crew.
With coffee cups and purpose clear,
We face the day without a fear.*

*In modern times, our mission's bright,
To aid our Veterans, with all our might.
Guiding them through the mortgage maze,
Ensuring their dreams, our highest praise.*

*With laptops humming, phones in hand,
We navigate the digital land.
Paperwork and numbers, we decode,
Turning dreams into a Veteran's abode.*

*The paperwork may pile up high,
But for our Veterans, we reach the sky.
With dedication, we stand as one,
Ensuring their battles are finally won.*

*So here's to mornings, bright and new,
To the VA Loan Guaranty crew.
In the modern era, we proudly serve,
For our Veterans' dreams, we'll always preserve.*



VA and LGY Fight To Keep Veterans In Their Homes

For many Veterans and their families, the impact of the global pandemic continues to hit home, as interest rates and the associated costs of living continue to rise. Some Veterans have experienced financial hardships, making it a challenge to retain their homes purchased with the VA home loan benefit. Helping Veterans and their families is a top priority at VA, and we are deeply committed to being **“A Key to Homeownership for Those Who Served.”**

During the past few weeks, you may have seen reporting in national news outlets about Veterans facing home foreclosure after exercising COVID-19 deferment and forbearance options. Among the immediate steps being taken by VA and LGY to assist Veterans:

- In November, we [issued a public appeal](#) to the mortgage industry to pause foreclosure of VA-guaranteed loans through May 31, 2024. During this pause, we are working with mortgage servicers to implement workable home retention solutions for Veterans.
- VA is extending the COVID-19 Refund Modification program through May 31, 2024. This program is aimed at helping Veterans and their families keep their homes by allowing VA to purchase a portion of the loan, creating a non-interest bearing second mortgage. Simultaneously, the mortgage servicer will modify the loan to make it current and work with Veterans to ensure the new payment is affordable. It's important to note that in a rising interest rate environment, the modified payment amount could increase, and loss mitigation options may vary by servicers. We have notified mortgage servicers of our call to pause foreclosure, the extension of the COVID-19 Refund Modification program, and the use of all available loss mitigation options to ensure Veterans are able to keep their homes.
- In Spring 2024, we will introduce VASP, which will offer an additional layer of long-term support to VA borrowers who do not qualify for traditional loss mitigation options. You can read more about VASP in the call-out-box on the right.

During the past year, [more than 145,000 Veterans and their families](#) have retained their home or avoided foreclosure. Still, we know there is important work that needs to be done in responding to the unprecedented economic pressure brought about by the pandemic and we will work with Veterans to explore their options during challenging times.

LGY has loan technicians working directly with Veterans to help them stay in their homes, including discussing available home retention options such as repayment plans, special forbearance, loan modifications and more. If you know of a Veteran who may benefit from this guidance, please have them contact their mortgage servicer to discuss their options. For more details, please visit [VA's housing assistance page](#).

Permanent Option for Stressed Borrowers

VASP is for Veterans who are most at risk of losing their homes and who may not qualify for other loss mitigation programs. This program will help fill the gaps left by the ending of temporary programs begun during the national emergency.

Through VASP, VA will purchase defaulted loans from mortgage servicers, modifies the terms to provide better interest rates (2.5 percent), and places the loans in the VA-owned portfolio as direct loans. Loan servicers will identify at-risk VA borrowers and submit their loans to VA for review, with no documentation required from Veterans.

VA is finalizing program details and plans to start offering the VASP option in the Spring of 2024. LGY employees will be offered VASP training prior to implementation.

Modernization Minute

LGY continues progressing towards a modernized technology stack, data transfer, and customer experience. To that end, our latest quarterly Technology Satisfaction survey revealed an improved staff experience with our technologies—our highest score yet! We were encouraged to see you all are already experiencing benefits from our system enhancements. Some items that address feedback we received include: FFLR pre-population, beginning development on our Modernized Software Platform, as well as improving the Funding Fee Refund Validation and Supplemental Claims processes.

Over the course of 2023, LGY also made strides modernizing the experience of our external customers, as we transitioned 40 individual Outlook inboxes to a single ServiceNow portal. Loan Administration and Loan Production transitioned in June, followed by Construction & Valuation and SAH in November. Veterans, lenders, servicers, and appraisers now have a single online front door for LGY support and have since submitted more than 10,000 inquiries, without increasing our phone volume. We now have a clearer understanding of the kinds of questions we receive, the volume of questions, and most importantly, how effectively we are responding. This level of insight is crucial for continual improvement of our high standards of customer service.

LGY Email Signature

Please remember to update your signature block to incorporate the new LGY tagline “A Key To Homeownership For Those Who Served.” You may download it [here](#) in the LGY Brand Guide and Templates section.

Firstname Lastname

Position Title

222.222.2222 [Optional*]

firstname.lastname@va.gov

Loan Guaranty Service

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

“A Key To Homeownership For Those Who Served”

Name: Calibri Bold, 12 pt, LGY Dark Blue (#003F72)

Title: Calibri Italics, 11 pt, black

Phone Number(s) and Email: Calibri, 11 pt

Loan Guaranty Service: Calibri Bold, 12 pt, LGY Dark Blue (#003F72)

VA and Tagline: Calibri, 11 pt, black

Contact Us

Thank you for reading the Buzz

Have any ideas about how we can make the newsletter even better?

Are there topics or individuals you want to hear more about?



Submit your ideas to the [LGY Suggestion Box](#).

Employee Recognition

Please use [this link](#) to recognize LGY Team members in the LGY Buzz for their extra efforts serving our Veterans, stakeholders, and internal customers.

Be Heard

Have thoughts or feedback for LGY leadership? Share them through the [LGY Suggestion Box](#).