



Setting This Up With ChatGPT, on a Mac

This works with a free ChatGPT account. The setup uses Terminal, which is a free program that is already on your Mac. It's a command style window that will assist with the setup.

Time: about 30 minutes, once.

Cost: free. A paid ChatGPT plan makes it faster, but you do not need one.

If Terminal is not for you. The Claude version of this guide has no typing of commands at all. If you would rather not use Terminal, use the Claude guide instead. It costs about \$20 a month. Both get you to the same place.

Before you start, you need:

- A Mac. There is a separate guide for Windows.
- An email address.
- **The starter zip** from vetclaimssystem.org. If you have not downloaded it yet, this guide tells you when to.
- Your records, or at least some of them. You can start without them.

Part 1. Make your ChatGPT account

- 1 Open your web browser and go to **chatgpt.com**
- 2 Click **Sign up** and follow what it asks. The free account is enough.

✓ **Where you should be now.** You have a ChatGPT account. You will sign in with it again in Part 4.

Part 2. Get your claim folder

- 3 Go to **vetclaimssystem.org** and press **Download the zip**.

- 4 Open your **Downloads** folder and double-click the file called **VA Claim Starter.zip**. It turns into a folder called **VA Claim**.
- 5 Drag that **VA Claim** folder into your **Documents** folder, so it is somewhere you will find it again.
- 6 If you already have records saved on your Mac, put those in the **VA Claim** folder too. If you do not have any yet, that is fine.

✓ **Where you should be now.** There is a folder called **VA Claim** in your Documents. Inside it are two files: **START HERE** and **Build Your Own VA Claim System**.

Part 3. Using Terminal

Now it's time to use Terminal for the setup.

- 7 Press **Command** and **Space** at the same time. A search box appears. Type `Terminal` and press Enter.

✓ **Where you should be now.** A window opens with a small amount of text and a blinking cursor. That is correct. It is supposed to look like that.

- 8 Copy the line below. Click into the Terminal window, paste it, and press Enter.

TYPE THIS

```
curl -fsSL https://chatgpt.com/codex/install.sh | sh
```

- 9 Text will scroll past for a minute or two. Let it finish. Scrolling text is normal and does not mean anything is wrong.
- 10 When it stops and you get your cursor back, **close the Terminal window completely and open a new one**. This step gets skipped constantly and it is the reason most people think the install failed.

✓ **Where you should be now.** You have a fresh Terminal window open.

Part 4. Open your folder and start

- 11 In the Terminal window, type `cd` then a **space**. Do not press Enter yet.

It should look like this, with the cursor after the space:

TYPE THIS

```
cd
```

- 12 Now drag your **VA Claim** folder from Finder directly onto the Terminal window and let go.

The folder's location fills itself in. You do not have to type it. This trick exists so nobody has to spell out a long path.

- 13 Press Enter.

- 14 Type `codex` and press Enter.

- 15 The first time, it asks how you want to sign in. Choose **Sign in with ChatGPT**. Your browser opens. Sign in with the account from Part 1.

✓ **Where you should be now.** You are back in Terminal and it is waiting for you to say something.

Part 5. Start

- 16 Type this sentence and press Enter:

SAY THIS

Read the toolkit file in this folder and follow the instructions in it.

You are done setting up. It will start asking you questions a few at a time. Answer in your own words. Every reply ends with one next step, so you never have to work out what comes next.

Coming back later

This runs for months, not one afternoon. That is normal.

Every time you come back, do these three things:

1. Open **Terminal**
2. Type `cd` and a space, drag the **VA Claim** folder on, press Enter
3. Type `codex` and press Enter

It picks up where you left off. You can walk away for a month.

If you start running out

The free account limits how much it can do in a stretch. Most of this system stays well under that. Setup, the questions about your service, the questionnaire, working through a decision letter. None of it is heavy.

One part is heavy: reading your records. A complete claims file can run several hundred pages. That is where a free account will stop and tell you to wait.

Three things worth knowing before you decide to pay for anything.

Nothing is lost when it stops. Your folder keeps everything. Come back later and carry on from where it stopped.

You can give it less at a time. A few documents per sitting instead of the whole folder. More sittings, same result.

Your records arrive over months anyway. A claims file can take months to come back after you request it. By the time there is a lot to read, you will already have been at this a while. There is no reason to do it all in one weekend.

If you want the heavy reading to go faster, a paid ChatGPT plan is month to month. Some people pay for one month when their records land, get through the reading, and cancel. That is \$20 once rather than \$20 every month.

Plans and limits change without much notice. What is written here was true in August 2026. If the numbers you see do not match, trust what ChatGPT tells you.

If something goes wrong

It says `command not found` after installing.

You did not close and reopen Terminal. Close every Terminal window, open a fresh one, try again. This is the most common problem by a wide margin.

It stopped partway through reading my records.

You hit the limit on the free account. Nothing is lost. See **If you start running out** above.

It only read part of a long document.

Tell it exactly this:

SAY THIS

Read the entire file from the beginning to the end before you reply.

It told me what a rating requires but did not show me the rule.

Tell it exactly this:

SAY THIS

Show me the actual text of that regulation. If it cannot show you the text, it did not read it. Do not act on what it said.

It seems to have forgotten everything.

You started it from the wrong place. Go back to the three steps under **Coming back later**.

Something else, or nothing here helped.

Email help@vetclaimssystem.org. Do not send medical records, claim numbers, or personal information.

One thing to avoid

You can also use Codex inside **ChatGPT on the web**. Do not do that for this.

Using the web version means uploading your records, which is the exact thing this guide exists to avoid. If you end up there, you are back to the ordinary setup, and you should read the privacy section in the main Orientation.

What this does and does not protect

Worth knowing, in plain terms.

Your records stay in your folder on your computer. You are not uploading them into a company's storage where they sit until you delete them.

But ChatGPT itself runs on OpenAI's computers, not yours. When it reads one of your files, the contents of that file get sent to them to be read. Every time. Nothing is kept there afterwards, and there is no pile of your documents sitting in an account somewhere, but the reading does happen on their end.

That is a real improvement over uploading everything. It is not the same as nothing ever leaving your computer. Anyone who tells you different is not being straight with you.

Checked against OpenAI's own documentation on 22 August 2026. Software changes.

If your screen does not match this guide, trust your screen.

Install and sign-in: <https://learn.chatgpt.com/docs/codex/cli>

Plans: <https://learn.chatgpt.com/docs/pricing>