

Serving Our Nation's Veterans

In Virginia, one in every eight adults is a veteran. Nationwide, veterans are one of every ten adults. Their substantial presence in the population and significant service to our country compels diligent study and attention to their welfare.

To analyze the veteran population (individuals who have served in the military, but are not currently on active duty), the Weldon Cooper Center's demographic professionals used the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 March Current Population Survey. This survey provides data on the U.S. population for the 2006 calendar year, but excludes people in institutional group quarters, such as hospitals, prisons, and retirement homes.

Who Are America's Veterans?

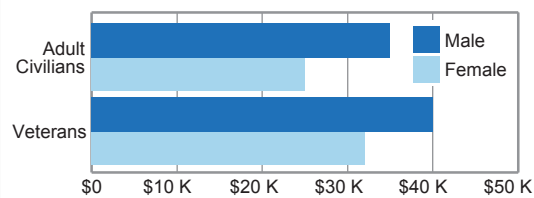
- In the United States, there are 21.9 million veterans, excluding those in hospitals, prisons, and retirement homes.
- More veterans live in the South than in the Northeast and West combined.
- Women comprise 7 percent of veterans.
- Eighty-six percent of veterans are White and 11 percent are Black.
- Since 2000, the number of Hispanic veterans has increased by 8 percent, while the total number of veterans has decreased about 10 percent.

Question: Did you know that Alan Alda, Tony Bennett, Drew Carey, Bill Cosby, Clint Eastwood and Montel Williams are all U. S. Veterans?

Are Veterans Like The Rest Of Us?

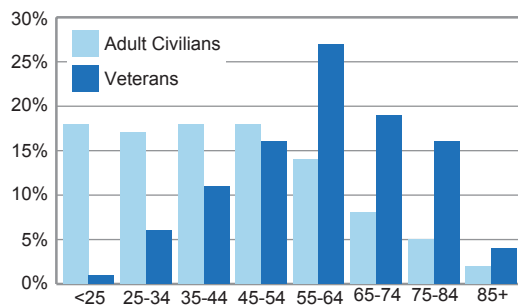
- Ninety-one percent of veterans age 25 and over have a high school diploma, compared to 86 percent of civilians.
- Slightly more than 5 percent of veterans are living in poverty, compared to 11 percent of adult civilians.
- Veteran workers generally earn higher salaries than adult civilian workers.

Median Worker Salaries



- According to the Homelessness Research Institute, veterans represent roughly 26 percent of America's homeless population, but only 11 percent of the adult civilian population.
- The veteran population is much older than the adult civilian population. The median age for adult civilians is 43, compared to 60 for veterans.

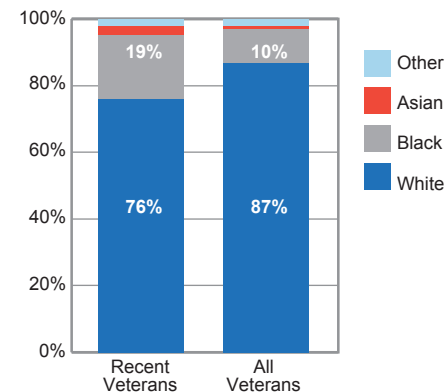
Age Distribution



Are Recent Veterans Worse Off?

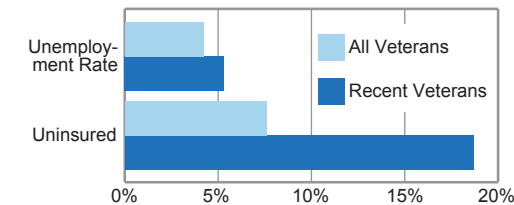
- Five percent of American's veterans, or 1.1 million individuals, most recently served during or after September 2001.
- Among these veterans, 20 percent are younger than 25 years old.
- They are more racially and ethnically diverse than veterans overall, and than the entire population.

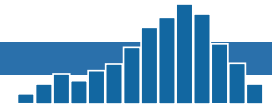
Racial Distribution



- They are more likely to be unemployed and lack health insurance than veterans overall.
- The median salary for recent veteran workers was \$35,000 in 2006, compared to \$40,000 for all veterans.

Health Insurance & Unemployment





Veteran Benefits

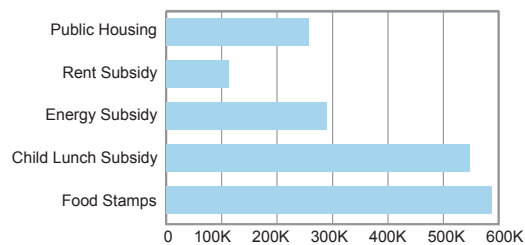
Veterans may be eligible for a variety of benefit programs administered by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. They also may receive other forms of subsidies, based on their income.

“Our men and women in uniform have earned these benefits and deserve every penny that is promised to them.”

Senator Jim Webb, Virginia

- In 2006, 1.9 million veterans (8.7 percent) reported as income payments from the Veteran Affairs, including disability compensation, survivor benefits, educational assistance, pensions, and others.
- 1.7 million working-age (17-64) veterans reported having a disability that limits or prevents them from working (the disability may or may not be service connected).
- Among these disabled veterans, 60 percent most recently served during the Vietnam Era and 27 percent received Veteran Affairs disability compensation in 2006.
- Almost 1.5 million veterans (7 percent) receive government assistance in the form of subsidies or welfare.

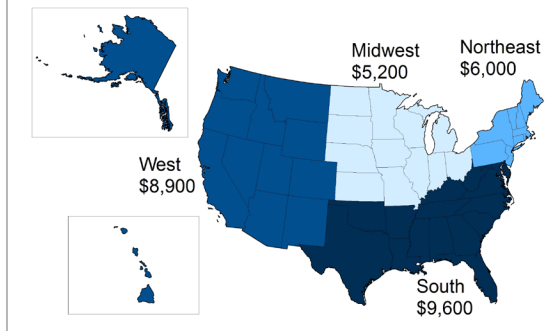
Veterans Receiving Government Subsidies



Veteran Benefits Vary By Region

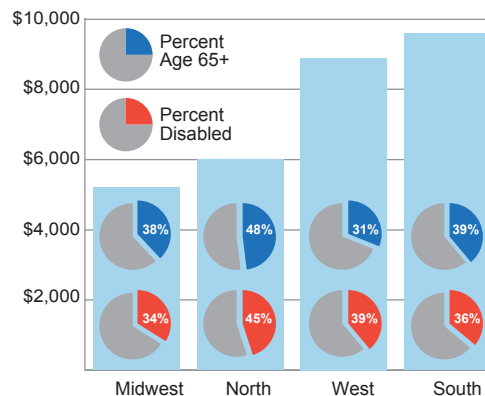
A recent study conducted by the Institute for Defense Analyses found that disability payments vary widely from state to state. Analysis of all types of income payments veterans receive from the Veteran Affairs shows a similar pattern.

Median Benefits By Region



Despite having an older veteran population, and one with a much higher percentage of disabled veterans, the North's median benefit payments are much lower than those in the South.

Median VA Benefits, Percent Disabled And Percent Age 65 Plus, By Region



Pivotal Points

Compared to the adult civilian population, veterans are:

- earning higher salaries.
- just as educated.
- less likely to live in poverty.
- more likely to be of retirement age (65+).

Compared to all veterans, our recent veterans (those who served during or after September 2001) are:

- only 5 percent of the total veteran population.
- more racially diverse.
- more likely to lack health insurance.
- earning relatively high salaries for their age.

“Our nation owes these brave men and women nothing less than the finest possible care.”

Senator John Warner, Virginia

Stat Chat is a periodic publication of the Demographics and Workforce section at the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. *Stat Chat* offers research snapshots on topics of current interest and is available at www.coopercenter.org/demographics. For more information, please contact Qian Cai (pronounced Chien Tsai), Director, at 434-982-5581 or by email at qc6q@virginia.edu.