African American Veterans - From Service to Civilian Life

This infographic provides key highlights of African American service members and veterans. The information and statistics in this document are from our various data collection efforts centered on military life, transition, employment, entrepreneurship, and higher education.

# African American Service Member Population

## Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve

350+ 000 African American active duty and select reserve members

*Total Military Force*

* Over 220,000 African American active duty service members
* Over 130,000 African American select reserve members

## Veterans

Over 2.3 million African American veterans in the U.S. today

**Post 9/11 Veterans**

* Post 9/11 veterans are more diverse compared to the general population (16% of the post 9/11 veterans is African American compared to the 13% of the general population that is 18 and over)
* 23% of the post 9/11 African American veterans are female

## Historical NUMBERS of African Americans who served in uniform

* On the eve of the revolutionary war, approximately 20% of the colonial population of 2.5 million men were African American.
* Over 200,000 African Americans, many of them former slaves, served in the U.S. military forces during the Civil War
* Over 400,000 African American soldiers served in uniform during World War I.
* Over 900,000 African American soldiers served in uniform during World War II.

# MILITARY SERVICE EXPERIENCES FOR African American VETERANS

## TOP MOTIVATIONS FOR MILITARY SERVICE

* EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS 62%
* OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE NEW EXPERIENCES, ADVENTURES, OR TRAVEL 52%
* CAREER OPPORTUNITIES 47%
* DESIRE TO SERVE MY COUNTRY 40%
* FINACIAL SECURITY 31%
* SENSE OF PURPOSE 31%

## TOP SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES STRENGTHENED BY MILITARY SERVICE

* Teamwork 91%
* Work ethic/discipline 89%
* Leadership and management skills 83%
* Mental toughness 81%
* Professionalism 80%
* Adaptation to different challenges 80%
* Self-Discipline 80%
* Ability to get things done 79%
* Coping with adversity 78%
* Social/Communication skills 78%
* Working effectively with supervisors and other authorities 76%

## WAS MILITARY SERVICE WORTH IT?

* 89% of African American service members reported that JOINING THE MILITARY WAS A GOOD DECISION
* 82% SERVED OUTSIDE OF THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES operating across different cultures, nations, and regions

## STEM

41% reported that their military specialization is STEM RELATED

# TRANISITON FOR African American VETERANS

## Top Reasons for Leaving Armed Service

* Lost faith or trust in military or political leadership 34%
* Family reasons 34%
* Pursue education and training opportunities 31%
* Military retirement (20 years or more) 30%
* Career change/alternative job opportunities 28%
* Completion of military service obligation (less than 20 years) 27%

## Military Influence on Post Service Aspirations

* 54% reported that military service prepared them for their civilian career
* 46% INDICATED THE DESIRE TO PURSUE A CAREER DIFFERENT FROM THEIR MILITARY SPECIALTY (MOS, AFSC, ETC.)
* 39% INDICATED THE DESIRE TO PURSUE A CAREER SIMILAR TO THEIR MILITARY SPECIALTY
* 15% INDICATE THEY ARE UNSURE IF THEY WILL PURSUE A CAREER SIMILAR TO THEIR MILITARY SPECIALTY

## Top Transitional Challenges

* Getting a job 62%
* Navigating VA administration or benefits 58%
* Financial struggles 44%
* Employment preparation 40%
* Depression 38%
* Skills translation 37%
* Getting socialized to civilian culture 35%
* Disability 34%
* Contradictory information from different sources 32%
* Understanding GI Bill benefits 30%

## Positive Impacts of Service

* 93% of Black/African American veteran respondents felt pride from their accomplishments during service.
* 91% of Black/African American veteran respondents reported their service had a positive impact on their life\*
* 90% of Black/African American veteran respondents indicated they matured as a result of their service.

56% of Black/African American veteran respondents reported they would be happy if their child(ren) were to join the military\*

## Transition Difficulty

* 55% of Black/African American veteran respondents characterized their financial transition as difficult or very difficult, compared with 48% of White/Non-Hispanic veteran respondents.
* 59% of Black/African American veteran respondents characterized their employment transition as difficult or very difficult, compared with 49% of White/Non-Hispanic veteran respondents.

**Time to Employment**

30% of Black/African American veteran respondents reported it took less than three months to find employment after their transition, compared with 51% of White/Non-Hispanic veteran respondents.

## AmericaServes

21% of military members/veterans seeking services in AmericaServes networks identified as African American/Black

The Top 3 service request categories for African American/Black clients are

1. Housing and Shelter

2. Employment

3. Benefits Navigation

# Employment FOR African American VETERANS

## Unemployment

* IN 2019 African American VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT WAS AT 4.9% {THIS IS HIGHER THAN TOAL VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH WAS AT 3.1%}
* IN 2019 African American Post 9/11 VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT WAS AT 6.8% {THIS IS HIGHER THAN TOTAL POST 9/11 VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH WAS AT 3.5%}

## Earnings

**$58,351 AVERAGE EARNINGS African American VETERANS**

{HIGHER compared to African American nonveteran counterparts who earn about $38,732

LOWER compared to non-minority veteran counterparts who earn about $77,217}

## TOP FIVE OCCUPATIONS FOR WOMEN VETERANS

1. Service Occupations (security guards, police officers, correctional officers and jailers, firefighters)
2. Transportation and Material Moving Occupation
3. Management, Business, and Financial Occupation
4. Office and Administrative Support Occupation
5. Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media Occupation

## TOP FIVE INDUSTRIES FOR WOMEN VETERANS

1. Public Administration
2. Health Care and Social Assistance
3. Transportation and Warehousing
4. Manufacturing
5. Retail Trade

# African American VETERANS IN STEM WORKFORCE

* $81,942 average earnings for African American veterans in STEM
* Of those veterans in the STEM workforce, 8% are African American. However, there has been a decline in African American veterans participating in STEM since 2012 (↓0.844 % points per year)
* $94,241 average earnings for African American veterans in STEM with a college degree or higher

# Entrepreneurship FOR African American VETERANS

* In 2018, 7% of African American veterans are self-employed compared to 5% of their nonveteran counterparts
* **THus** African American veterans are 1.275 times more likely to be self-employed compared to African American nonveterans

**Reasons**

* DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE
* CREATIVITY & FLEXIBILITY
* FINANCIAL & INDEPENDENCE
* RECOGNIZE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

**obsticles**

**82% EXPERIENCE AT LEAST ONE OBSTACLE/BARRIER TO STARTING AND OWNING THEIR BUSINESS**

**Top obstacles**

* Lack of necessary networks
* Lack of Capital

**RESOURCES Afrcian American ENTREPRENEURS FIND MOST HELPFUL:**

* Information on conferences and workshops
* Education
* Networking/Peer network

# Education FOR African American VETERANS

## EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

In 2018, African American post 9/11 veterans have achieved:

* 36% bachelor degree or higher
* 43% some college or associate degree
* 18% high school degree
* 4% less than high school degree

## BARRIERS THAT HINDERED PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

* Lack of financial resources/ Financial burden 62%
* GI Bill benefits expire before I complete my degree 30%
* Personal/family obligations 24%
* Health/disability issues 24%
* Conflict between job and school 18%
* Bureaucracy associated with VA paperwork and processing 18%

## CHALLENGES WHILE PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION

* Lack of financial resources 37%
* Age differences 29%
* Few veterans resources on campus 26%
* Working full time job 26%
* Family responsibilities 22%
* Transferring academic credits 20%

## HELPFUL RESOURCES AND ASSETS FOR VETERAN SUCCESS

* Military/veteran friendly campus 68%
* Flexible class schedules 67%
* Academic advising/counseling 65%
* Preferred classroom settings and instruction 59%
* Dedicated veterans office & administrators on campus 56%
* Veterans supportive faculty 56%
* Career services and counseling 54%
* Academic preparation courses & remediation 53%

# References

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