Women in the Military: From Service to Civilian Life

This Women in the Military: From Service to Civilian Life infographic provides key highlights on women in the military. The information and statistics in this document is from our various data collection efforts centered on military life, transition, employment, entrepreneurship, and higher education.

# Women Service Member Population

## Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve

Currently, there are over 361,000 active duty and selected reserve members (which represents around 17% of the total DoD force)

## TOTAL DoD Force

Active Duty = 204,628 (16% of DoD Active duty force)

Selected Reserves = 158,173 (19% of the Selected Reserve force)

## Veteran

Currently, there are over 2 million female veterans, which represents around 10% of the veteran population

Female post-9/11 veterans are one of the fastest growing population and represent 17% of the post-9/11 veteran population

# Military Service for Women

## Top Motivations for Military Service

* Educational benefits (62%)
* Opportunity to pursue new experiences, adventures, or travel (58%)
* Desire to serve my country (52%)
* Sense of purpose (39%)
* Career Opportunities (33%)

## Top Skills and Attributes Strengthened by Military Service

* Work ethic and discipline (85%)
* Teamwork (84%)
* Adaptation to different challenges (81%)
* Mental toughness (79%)
* Leadership and management skills (77%)
* Professionalism (74%)
* Ability to get things done (74%)
* Perseverance (74%)
* Training & teaching others (72%)
* Self-Discipline (72%)
* Coping with adversity (72%)

## Was Military Service Worth It?

* 88% of female service members reported that joining the military was a good decision
* 73% served outside of the continental United States operating across different cultures, nations, and regions

## STEM

* About 40 percent of female service members reported that their military specialization is STEM related

# Transition for Women Veterans

## Top Reasons for Leaving Armed Services

* Family reasons (41%)
* Lost faith or trust in military or political leadership (36%)
* Pursue education and training opportunities (29%)
* Concerns & grievances about service experiences (26%)
* Completion of military service obligation (less than 20 years) (26%)

## Most Significant Transition Challenges?

* Navigating VA programs, benefits, and services (59%)
* Finding a job (55%)
* Financial struggles (47%)
* Depression (41%)
* Getting socialized to civilian culture (38%)
* Skills translation (37%)
* Contradictory information from different sources (33%)
* Disability (32%)
* Understanding GI Bill benefits (31%)
* Employment preparation (30%)

## AmericaServes. Coordinating Care. Transforming Communities

In AmericaServes the % of female veterans navigating services is MORE THAN DOUBLE that of female veterans nationally

### Top service categories for female vets:

* Housing & Shelter
* Employment
* Individual & Family Support

## Military Influence on Post-Service Aspirations?

* 66% reported that military service prepared them for their civilian career, yet

### Post Military Career

* 33% indicate the desire to pursue a career *similar to* their military specialty (MOS, AFSC, etc.)
* 52% indicate the desire to pursue a career *different* from their military specialty
* 15% indicate they are unsure if they will pursue a career similar *to* their military specialty

## Experiences of service and post-service life differ greatly by service member gender

### Female veterans are similar to male veterans in their responses regarding the positive impacts of service

* 95% of male and 93% of female veteran respondents indicate that their service had a positive impact on their life.
* 97% of male respondents and 96% of female respondents reported feeling pride from their accomplishments during service.
* 96% of male and 97% of female respondents reported having matured as a result of their service.

### Results indicate that transition and post-service life are more challenging for female veteran respondents (particularly in regards to finances)

* 67% of female veteran respondents characterized their financial transition as difficult or very difficult, compared with 47% of male veteran respondents.
* 37% of female veteran respondents selected “loss of income” as a key transition challenge, compared with 23% of male veteran respondents.
* There was a statistically significant difference in the time it took male and female veteran respondents to find employment after their transition, with female veteran respondents reporting longer periods of time.

# Employment for Women Veterans

## Unemployment

In 2017

* female veteran unemployment was at 4.1%, this is higher than male veteran unemployment which was at 3.6%.
* female post-9/11 veteran unemployment was at 5.5%, this is higher than post-9/11 male veteran unemployment which was at 4.3%.

## Earnings

* Total Earnings: Female veterans earn about $52,111.
* This is higher compared to their nonveteran female counterparts who earn about $40,861
* BUT lower than their male veteran counterparts who earn about $71,289

## Top five occupations for women veterans

* Office and Administrative Support Occupations
* Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
* Management Occupations
* Sales and Related Occupations
* Education, Training, and Library Occupations

## Top five industries for women veterans

* Health Care and Social Assistance
* Public Administration
* Educational Services
* Retail Trade
* Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

## Women Veterans in STEM Workforce

* Female veterans are nearly 2 times more likely to be in a STEM occupation than female nonveterans
* Female veterans in STEM average total earnings is about $77,924
* 2.06% unemployment rate for female veterans in STEM 2012-2016

### Top 3 occupations

1. Computer & Mathematical
2. Computer Science & Information Technology
3. Engineering

### Top 3 industries

* Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
* Public Administration
* Manufacturing

# Entrepreneurship for Women Veterans

Approximately 15% of veteran owned businesses are owned by women.

## Reasons for Pursuing Entrepreneurship

* Dissatisfaction with the Civilian Workforce
* Creativity and Flexibility
* Financial and Personal Independence
* Recognize Business Opportunities
* Family and Work Life Balance

## Characteristics of women veteran business owners include:

* Knowledgeable
* Passionate
* Customer focused
* Driven by transparency and integrity

**Obstacles**

* 83% of women reported facing an obstacle or barrier related to owning or starting their business. When elaborating on the obstacles, some of the responses were:

“If I was a white male, would be easier”

“It's hard starting a not for profit especially without assistance or support. My income is the sole means for the organization.”

“My primary obstacle/challenge is being active on social media”

## Resources Women Entrepreneurs Find Most Helpful

* Information on conferences and workshops
* Business Planning/Business Plan Write-Up
* Education
* Peer Mentorship
* Networking/Peer network
* Work/Life Balance

# Higher Education for Women Veterans

**Education Attainment.** Women service members as a group achieved:

* 2% have less than a high school diploma
* 18% have a high school degree
* 40% have some college or associate degree
* 41% have a college degree (bachelor’s or higher)

**Motivations for Pursuing Higher Education**

* Career/job opportunities (85%)
* Self-improvement and personal growth (74%)
* Potential for making money/Improve economic status (66%)
* Enjoy education and learning (56%)
* Professional advancement (51%)
* Make use of benefits (50%)
* Want to help people/society (48%)
* Support family ( 41%)
* Role model to children (37%)

**Problems or Barriers that Hindered Pursuit of Higher Education**

* Lack of financial resources/ Financial burden (57%)
* Health/disability issues (28%)
* Personal/family obligations (28%)
* GI Bill benefits expire before I complete my degree (26% )
* Conflict between job and school (20%)
* Inflexibility in class schedules (16%)
* Bureaucracy associated with VA paperwork and processing (15% )
* Lack of confidence (15% )

**Challenges while Pursuing Higher Education**

* Age differences (39%)
* Lack of financial resources (33%)
* Working full time job (31%)
* Few veterans resources on campus (28%)
* Family responsibilities (27%)
* Transferring academic credits (24%)
* Lack of understanding from faculty about military (22%)
* Administering veterans benefits (21%)
* Being a commuter student (20% )

**Helpful/Very Helpful Resources for Veteran Success**

* Military/veteran friendly campus (64%)
* Flexible class schedules (61%)
* Academic advising/counseling (60%)
* Preferred classroom settings and instruction (55%)
* Dedicated veterans office & administrators on campus (55%)
* Veterans supportive faculty (53%)
* "Hands-on" learning (44%)
* Career services and counseling (44%)
* Academic preparation courses & remediation (41%)

# Citations

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