



MISSING PERSPECTIVES:

Black & African Americans in the Military—From Service to Civilian Life

To date, existing research related to the experiences of Black and African American service members, veterans, and military families has been either limited or lacking entirely. This data brief addresses a critical gap in understanding their experiences, particularly in the transition from the military to civilian life. The information and data in this document are from various sources centered on military life, transition, employment, entrepreneurship, and higher education.

CURRENT POPULATION

Black & African American Service Members & Veterans

ACTIVE DUTY, GUARD, & RESERVE

350,000+ Black & African American Active Duty and Selected Reserve Members to date

VETERANS

2.4 million+ Black & African American veterans in the U.S. today

PERIOD OF SERVICE

- ▶ 549,000+ served during WW II, Korean War, and Vietnam era veterans
- ▶ 544,000+ served during Gulf War Era I
- ▶ 797,000+ served during Gulf War Era II (Post 9/11 Veteran)
- ▶ 558,000+ served during other service periods

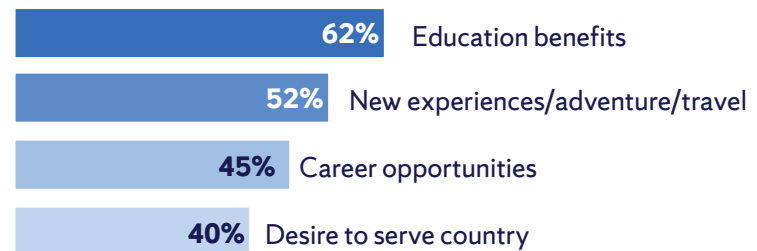
POST 9/11 VETERANS

OF ALL POST-9/11 VETERANS, 17% ARE BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN (THIS IS HIGHER COMPARED TO THE 13% OF NONVETERAN COUNTERPARTS)

OF ALL FEMALE POST 9/11 VETERANS, 30% ARE BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN

Views on Military Service

TOP MOTIVATIONS FOR MILITARY SERVICE



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%)

WAS MILITARY SERVICE WORTH IT?

89% reported that joining the military was a GOOD decision

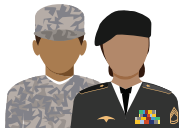
HOWEVER

- ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS REPORTED
- 56% have considered "racial/ethnic discrimination" in their decision-making process
 - 53% have "concerns about safety regarding base/installation preferences due to my (or my family member's) racial/ethnic identity"

Transition

PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE

93%



FELT PRIDE FROM THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING SERVICE.

YET

- ▶ 56% reported they would be happy if their child(ren) were to join the military*
- ▶ 49% felt retaliated against or penalized after standing up for something
- ▶ 45% believe their racial/ethnic identity has hurt their ability to get ahead at work

SERVICES OR PROGRAMS USED OR NEEDED

(Since January 2020)

	Yes, used	Needed, but couldn't access	No, did not need
BENEFITS & CLAIMS ASSISTANCE (e.g., assistance with Veteran education, disability, health, and loan programs)	53%	13%	34%
BEHAVIORAL & MENTAL HEALTH CARE (e.g., access to and availability of mental health services)	50%	13%	37%
MEDICAL CARE (e.g., access to and availability of medical care for military members, Veterans, and their families)	70%	13%	17%
COMMUNITY SERVICE (e.g., finding volunteer opportunities, social support)	37%	20%	43%
EMPLOYMENT & CAREER DEVELOPMENT (e.g., job training, job placement services, resume writing, starting a business)	30%	22%	47%
FOOD & NUTRITION (e.g., food stamps)	14%	18%	68%
FOOD & NUTRITION FROM SCHOOL (e.g., meals from school, free lunch program)	21%	12%	67%
HOUSING SERVICES OR ASSISTANCE (e.g., locating affordable housing, housing subsidies or vouchers, transitional housing)	14%	14%	72%
LEGAL SERVICES (e.g., wills, power of attorney, VA benefit appeals, resolving landlord disputes, divorce, custody/child support)	28%	20%	52%
CAREGIVING RESOURCES (e.g., resources related to caregiving needs of day-to-day life in your community)	13%	19%	68%

TOP REASONS FOR NOT USING SERVICES

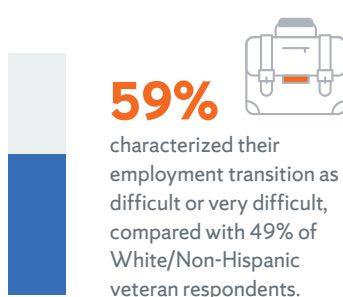
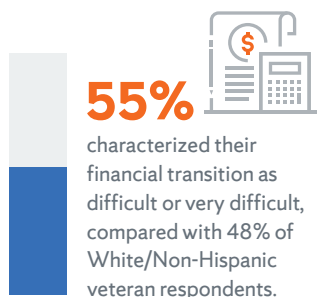
STIGMA

- ▶ Worried about what others (family, friends, coworkers/supervisor) think if used this service

NAVIGATION

- ▶ Didn't know how to access this service
- ▶ Didn't think was eligible for this service

TRANSITION DIFFICULTIES



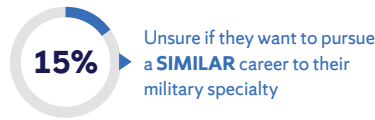
TIME TO EMPLOYMENT

30% REPORTED IT TOOK LESS THAN THREE MONTHS TO FIND EMPLOYMENT AFTER THEIR TRANSITION compared with 51% of White/Non-Hispanic veterans



Employment

POST SERVICE CAREER



MILITARY SPOUSE UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Female Black and African American military spouses are

3X MORE LIKELY

TO BE UNEMPLOYED compared to civilian counterparts and

EARN 54% LESS THAN THE TOTAL POPULATION



\$24,500
COMPARED TO
\$42,600

UNEMPLOYMENT

In 2021, Black & African American veteran unemployment was at

5.0%

this was **HIGHER** compared to White non Hispanic veteran counterparts but **LOWER** compared to Black and African American nonveteran counterparts

The unemployment rate for **MALE** Black and African American veterans was 5.1%

The unemployment rate for **FEMALE** Black and African American veterans was 4.8%

EARNINGS

IN 2019

\$50,000



Average earnings for Black and African American veterans

HIGHER compared to the total median of the U.S. population who earn about \$42,600

LOWER compared to non-minority veteran counterparts who earn about \$31,400

Entrepreneurship



MOTIVATIONS FOR PURSUING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

58% INDICATE THAT ENTREPRENEURSHIP HELPED THEM FIND A PURPOSE AFTER MILITARY

43% INDICATE THAT ENTREPRENEURSHIP MADE THEIR TRANSITION INTO CIVILIAN LIFE EASIER

58% CONSIDER THEMSELVES SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

73% BELIEVE THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS IS DIFFICULTY



40% have difficulty navigating the resources in their local community

CURRENT BARRIERS

IN 2020

69% applied for funding (compared to 52% White/ Non-Hispanic veteran respondents)

63% indicated that the capital they need is not readily available



57% of those that applied for funding were turned down (compared to 29% white counterparts)

67% that were turned down did not apply again (compared to 66% white counterparts)

Syracuse University's D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) is the first national institute in higher education singularly focused on advancing the lives of the nation's military, veterans, and their families. Through its professional staff and experts, and with the support of founding partner JPMorgan Chase Co. as well as U.S. Navy veteran, IVMF Advisory Board Co-Chair, University Life Trustee and Co-Founder & Chairman Emeritus of the Carlyle Group Daniel D'Aniello '68, H'20 and his wife, Gayle, the IVMF delivers leading programs in career and entrepreneurship education and training, while also conducting actionable research, policy analysis, and program evaluations. The IVMF also supports veterans and their families, once they transition back into civilian life, as they navigate the maze of social services in their communities, enhancing access to this care working side-by-side with local providers across the country. The Institute is committed to advancing the post-service lives of those who have served in America's armed forces and their families.

In Collaboration with:



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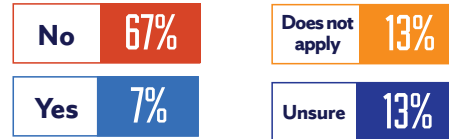
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SUGGESTED CITATION

Maury, R.V.; Zoli, C.; Fay, D.; Stone, B.; Linsner, R. K.; Akin, J.L.; Rivera, C.C.; Harvie, J.Y.; & Tihic, M. (2022). Data Brief: Missing Perspectives: Black and African American in The Military - From Service to Civilian Life. Syracuse, NY: Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Syracuse University.

Higher Education

Afford school without the GI Bill?



IN 2020

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

Black & African American post 9/11 veterans have achieved:



BARRIERS That Hindered Pursuit of Higher Education

- 62% Lack of financial resources/ Financial burden
- 30% GI Bill benefits expire before complete degree
- 24% Personal/family obligations

RESOURCES on Campus for Veteran Success

- 68% Military/veteran friendly campus
- 67% Flexible class schedules
- 65% Academic advising/counseling

References

Population

Data for Black and African American Active Duty Service Members and Selected Reserves are from 2020 Demographics Profile of the Military Community. Retrieved from <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2020-demographics-report.pdf>

Data for Black and African American Veterans are from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey- 2021 Annual Average. Washington, D.C.

Views of Military Service: This section predominately uses data from Black and African American veterans unless otherwise noted

Zoli, C., Maury, R., & Fay, D. (2015, November). Missing Perspectives: Servicemembers' Transition from Service to Civilian Life data-driven research to enact the promise of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Syracuse, NY: Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Syracuse University.

Data reported for racial/ethnic discrimination and concerns about safety was analyzed for Black and African American Active Duty Service Members respondents using Blue Star Families. (2022). Blue Star Families' social impact research 2021: The diverse experiences of military & veteran families of color. Blue Star Families' Department of Applied Research.

Transition: This section predominately uses data from Black and African American veterans unless otherwise noted

Some of the perceptions to service, transition difficulties, and time to employment were analyzed from unpublished data collected for the 2018-2016 Blue Star Families' annual Military Family Lifestyle Surveys (* is 2017 and 2018 only). Please note these findings are limited due to small sample size (n< 200) for Black and African American veteran respondents. This effort is from Blue Star Families in collaboration with the IVMF. For more information, see Blue Star Families, 2018-2016 Military Family Lifestyle Survey Comprehensive Report. Blue Star Families. Retrieved from <https://bluestarfam.org/survey/>

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Some results in this section (unused services and programs) are unpublished result size (n< 200 for Black and African American

veteran respondents) from the effort related to Blue Star Families. (2022). Blue Star Families' social impact research 2021: The diverse experiences of military & veteran families of color. Blue Star Families' Department of Applied Research.

Employment/Entrepreneurship: This section predominately uses data from Black and African American veterans unless otherwise noted

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Maury, R.; Tihic, M., Feng., R. (2022). Data Brief: Black & African American Veteran Entrepreneurs. Syracuse, NY: Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Syracuse University.

Higher Education: This section predominately uses data from Black and African American veterans unless otherwise noted

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