

# Veterans



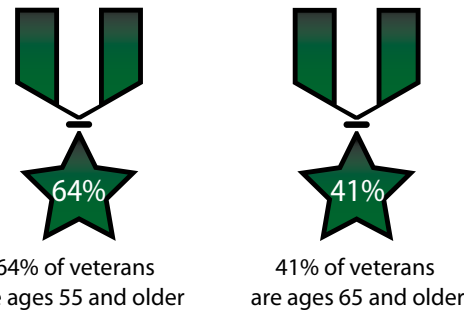
Veterans have made great sacrifices for our country. They have protected and served the nation, yet many return home and struggle with poverty and economic insecurity. There are roughly 22.5 million veterans in the United States—many above the retirement age—and more than 1.4 million of them are living in poverty. While the overall unemployment rate for veterans is lower than the national average and has been steadily declining during the recovery, the unemployment rate for recent veterans remains high: It was 9 percent, on average, in 2013. However, for veterans able to find civilian jobs, 1 in 10 are unable to earn a living wage. Fortunately, veteran homelessness has seen a 24 percent decrease since 2010, but there are thousands still struggling and even more who are hungry. We must address the needs of the fastest-growing contingent of economically insecure veterans—namely, single parents, a majority of whom are women. We must continue to enable veterans to enjoy the same opportunities for success that all Americans deserve.

**a** *Veterans in poverty*  
As of 2009, 6.3 percent of veterans live in poverty in the United States



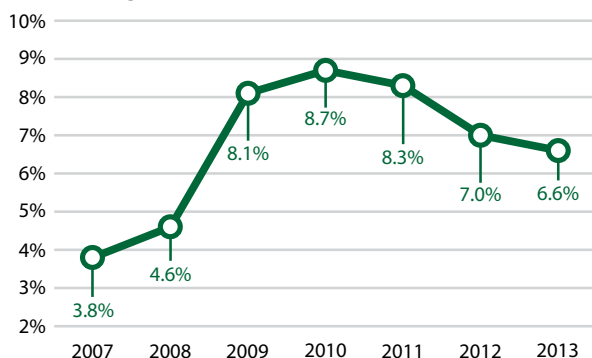
Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, *Health Insurance Coverage, Poverty, and Income of Veterans: 2000 to 2009* (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2011), available at [http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/HealthIns\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/HealthIns_FINAL.pdf).

**b** *Veterans are aging*  
As veterans age, they need further services and support



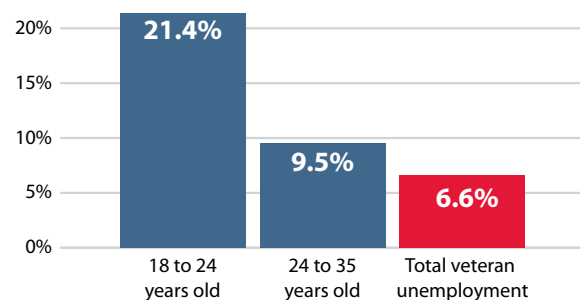
Source: Westat, "National Survey of Veterans, Active Duty Service Members, Demobilized National Guard and Reserve Members, Family Members, and Surviving Spouses" (Washington: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2010), available at <http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/surveysandstudies/nvssurveyfinalweightedreport.pdf>.

**c** *The Great Recession hit veterans hard*  
Fortunately, the overall veteran unemployment rate continues to fall



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation of Veterans Summary," Press release, March 20, 2014, available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.nr0.htm>.

**d** *Young veteran unemployment is a persistent problem*  
Average unemployment rate of veterans by age, 2013

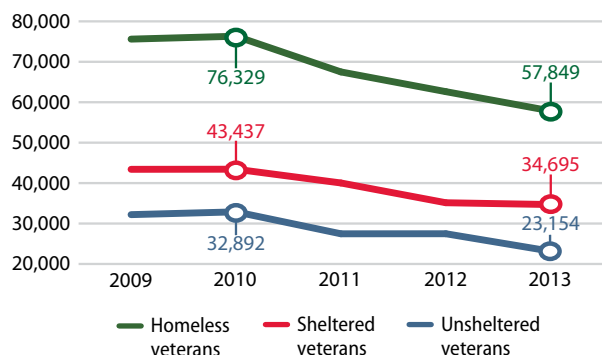


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation of Veterans Summary Table A. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, 2012-2013 annual averages," available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.a.htm> (last accessed May 2014); Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table 2A. Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, age, and period of service, 2013 annual averages," available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.t02A.htm> (last accessed May 2014).

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### Veteran homelessness

The number of homeless veterans has declined by 24 percent since 2010, yet there were still 57,849 homeless veterans at any point in time in 2013



Source: Office of Community Planning and Development, The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 1, Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013), available at <https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/ahar-2013-part1.pdf>.

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### Veterans going hungry

Number of veterans who lived in households that relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to provide food for their families, 2011

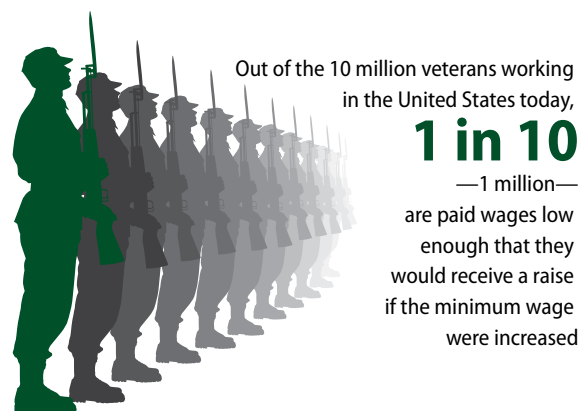


Source: Arloc Sherman and Brynne Keith-Jennings, "SNAP Benefit Cuts Will Affect Thousands of Veterans In Every State" (Washington: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2013), available at <http://www.cbpp.org/files/10-28-13fa.pdf>.

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### Veterans' wages

Number of veterans who would get a raise if we increase the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour

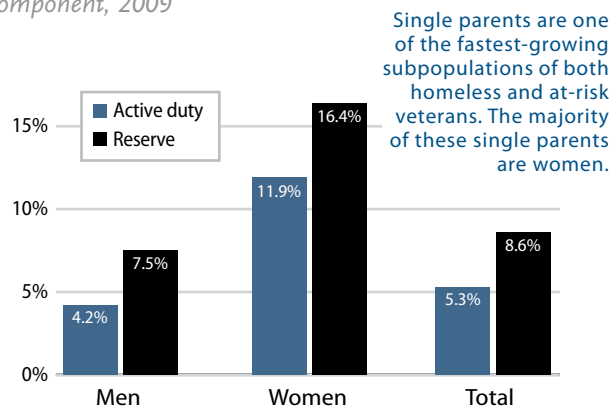


Source: David Cooper, "A Million Veterans Would Benefit from a Minimum Wage Increase," Working Economics, April 24, 2014, available at <http://www.epi.org/blog/million-veterans-benefit-minimum-wage/>.

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### Single-parent veterans and service members are increasingly in need of further support

Percentages of single parents by gender and service component, 2009



Source: Timothy Casey and Laurie Maldonado, "Worst-Off: Single-Parent Families in the United States" (New York: Legal Momentum, 2012), Table 8.

The United States must ensure that veterans' service is matched with economic opportunity and support. Aside from the moral imperative to assist those who have served our country, the ability of veterans to find employment, provide for their families, and find affordable housing is a crucial component of America's current and future workforce and economic success.

Moving forward, we need to ensure that the nation's priorities are straight—veterans cannot continue to go hungry and/or live on the streets. We must strengthen and reinforce crucial services and supports and implement smart public policies—such as raising the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour—in order to provide the opportunities necessary to lift veterans out of poverty and ensure long-term growth and shared prosperity.

Veterans at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness can find help and resources by calling the Veterans Crisis Line at 1.877.424.3838 for 24/7 assistance.