



Fact Sheet:

Employment of Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities

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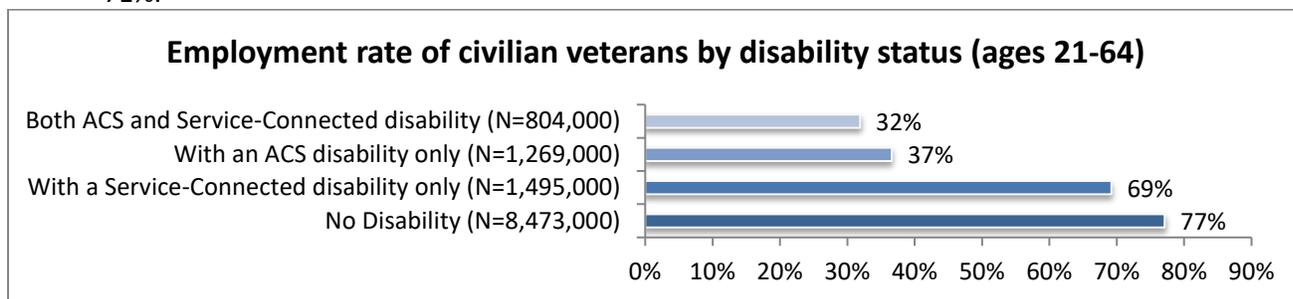
Disability measurements and veterans:

There are two different measurements of disability for veterans in the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS):

- **ACS disability:** A difficulty with one or more of the following: hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care and independent living.ⁱ
- **Service-connected (SC) disability:** A disease or injury determined to have occurred during military service. The SC disability rating is determined by the Veterans’ Administration and given as a percentage from 0% - 100%.ⁱⁱ Many veterans with service-connected disabilities do not report an ACS disability.

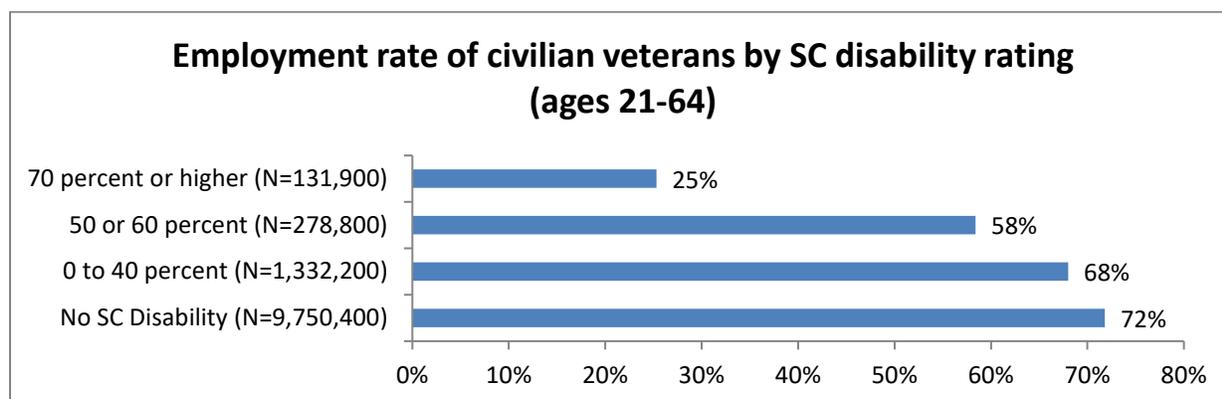
Key statisticsⁱⁱⁱ on employment rate for civilian veterans with disabilities:

- Nearly a third (29.6%, 3.5 million) of the 12 million civilian veterans ages 21-64 report having a disability. 12.4% (1,495,000) of veterans report only a SC disability, 10.5% report an ACS disability only and 6.7% report both an ACS and a SC disability.
- The employment rate of veterans with disabilities is significantly lower than that of veterans without disabilities. Only about a third of veterans who report both an ACS and SC disability (32%) and only 37% of those reporting only an ACS disability are employed, compared with over three-quarters of veterans without disabilities.
- As a comparison, the overall employment rate of the civilian non-institutionalized population is 71%.



Key statistics on employment rate for veterans with a service-connected (SC) disability rating:

- 35.1% of veterans with a SC disability have a disability rating of 50% or higher (410,700).
- Veterans with a SC disability rating of 50% or higher have significantly lower rates of employment than those with ratings of 0 to 40%.
- Only 25% of the 131,900 veterans with a SC rating of 70% or higher are employed.



These findings in context

- Several laws protect the employment rights of veterans with disabilities. Like all Americans, they are covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition, the United Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) requires employers to reinstate returning veterans to the same civilian job they left when deployed. Veterans with and without disabilities may also be eligible for hiring preferences.^{iv}
- Veterans included in these estimates could have served as long ago as the Vietnam era or as recently as the Gulf War era II.
- Gulf War Era II veterans have a higher prevalence of the “signature disabilities” of the Gulf War (PTSD, TBI and/or depression). An estimated 30% of recently returned veterans screen positive for one or more of these impairments.^v
- For these veterans, delays and barriers in accessing treatment could significantly impact employment outcomes.
- A survey of veterans with disabilities^{vi} found that:
 - 57% feared they would be discriminated against in hiring because of their disability.
 - Only 36% intended to disclose their disability to an employer.
 - Only 27% intended to request an accommodation when employed.
- A survey of employers^{vii} found that the employers surveyed:

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The Northeast ADA Center is a member of the [ADA National Network](#) funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90DP0088). We provide information, guidance, and training on implementation of all aspects of the ADA. Our center is located at the Yang-Tan Institute at Cornell University. Our staff consists of individuals with and without disabilities who have extensive experience in the disability field.

- Struggle with accommodating veterans with the signature disabilities of PTSD, TBI and depression.
- Are confused about resources related to recruiting or accommodating veterans with disabilities and largely do not use these resources regularly or effectively.
- Do not understand the disability disclosure rights of veterans with disabilities.

Key actions & strategies for employers

- Build a climate of trust so that veterans can come forward with an accommodation request.
- Designate expertise in veterans' workplace issues and resources.
- Be prepared to be responsive and flexible to the changing accommodation needs of veterans. Veterans' diagnoses and treatments may be still be unfolding well after the return to civilian work life.
- Develop competence in accommodating the signature disabilities (PTSD, TBI and depression).
- Managers and supervisors are key to the employment and inclusion of veterans with disabilities. Make sure managers and supervisors are on-board and understand their role.
- Make sure Employee Assistance Program professionals understand veterans' issues.
- Use veteran affinity or resource groups to both give veterans with disabilities a voice within the organization and to provide a sense of peer support.
- Consider your needs and type of business to select one or two partners from the myriad of potential resources and organizations that may assist in recruiting veterans with disabilities. Sustain this partnership through on-going trust, communication and feedback.

ⁱ For more information regarding the ACS and the disability categories see: Erickson, W., Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2012). 2011 Disability Status Report: United States. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI). www.DisabilityStatistics.org

ⁱⁱ For more on SC disability compensation: <http://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/va-disability-compensation-rates.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Estimates are based on analysis of the 2011 ACS Public Use Microdata (PUMS) and limited to the non-institutionalized working age (21-64) civilian population. The U.S Census Bureau defines veterans as persons who have served on active duty in the US armed forces, military Reserves or National Guard. It excludes the persons in the Reserves or National Guard who only received training and have not been on active duty.

^{iv} For more information, go to <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/vetpref>.

^v Tanielan T, Jaycox, L, (Eds.) (2008). Invisible wounds of war: Psychological and cognitive injuries, their consequences, and services to assist recovery. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Center for Military Health Policy. Accessed April 29, 2013 at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG720.html>.

^{vi} Rudstam, H., Wilson, J. & Gower. (2011). Beyond Goodwill: Are Employers Prepared to Hire, Accommodate and Retain Returning Veterans with Disabilities? Paper presented at the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) Annual Spring Conference, Los Angeles, CA.

^{vii} Rudstam, H. H., Strobel Gower, W., Cook, L. (2012) Beyond Yellow Ribbons: Are Employers Prepared to Hire, Accommodate and Retain Returning Veterans with Disabilities? Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 36(1), 87-95.

