

KEY FACTS

ABOUT TODAY'S VETERANS

- ★ More than 2 million union members are veterans. Sixteen percent of veterans in the workforce are union members, and 14 percent of union members are veterans. (Census Bureau and Economic Policy Institute)
- ★ Today, America has about 23.8 million living veterans, 7.5 percent of whom are women. About 37 million people are dependents (spouses and dependent children) of living veterans or survivors of deceased veterans. Together, they represent 20 percent of the U.S. population. (Department of Veterans Affairs, www1.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Pamphlet_2-1-08.pdf)
- ★ Most veterans living today served during times of war. The largest segment of the veteran population—7.9 million—is made up of Vietnam Era veterans. (Department of Veterans Affairs, www1.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Pamphlet_2-1-08.pdf)
- ★ More than 4,500 military personnel have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan, and more than 32,000 have been wounded. (<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/fallen/>; www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf)
- ★ Among veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, 34 percent were deployed multiple times. (Department of Veterans Affairs, www1.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Pamphlet_2-1-08.pdf)
- ★ 300,000 U.S. troops are suffering from major depression or post-traumatic stress from serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and only about half have sought treatment. (Rand Corporation)
- ★ Altogether, 2.9 million veterans receive VA disability compensation; 272,425 were rated 100 percent disabled as of March 31, 2008. (Department of Veterans Affairs, www1.va.gov/vetdata/docs/4X6_spring08_sharepoint.pdf)
- ★ Eighteen percent of veterans recently back from tours of duty are unemployed. (Department of Veterans Affairs, www1.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Abt_Emplymnt_Histories_FINAL_COMPILATION_REPORT_Sept28.pdf)
- ★ Of those employed since leaving the military, 25 percent earn less than \$21,840 a year. (Department of Veterans Affairs, www1.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Abt_Emplymnt_Histories_FINAL_COMPILATION_REPORT_Sept28.pdf)
- ★ On any given day, as many as 250,000 veterans (male and female) are living on the streets or in shelters, and perhaps twice as many experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year. (Department of Veterans Affairs, www.va.gov/oa/pocketcard/homeless.asp)
- ★ As Rep. Bob Filner (D-Calif.), chair of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, puts it: "Each year we see VA struggling to do more and more with a budget that does not quite keep up." (House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, <http://veterans.house.gov/hearings/hearing.aspx?NewsID=130>)

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