



2024

VETERANS WELL-BEING SURVEY: Focus on Employment, Education and Health

Edelman, a global communications marketing firm, conducted a survey in May-July 2024 to assess perceptions of veterans' well-being in America. The survey examined audiences' perceptions of veterans' job skills, education and employment to understand how veterans' may be viewed as potential employment candidates, perceptions of veterans' mental and physical health and their role in society.

In total, Edelman surveyed 5,374 individuals across the United States, including non-veterans/civilians, veterans/military personnel, military spouses, Veteran Service Organizations, educators and employers/HR professionals.





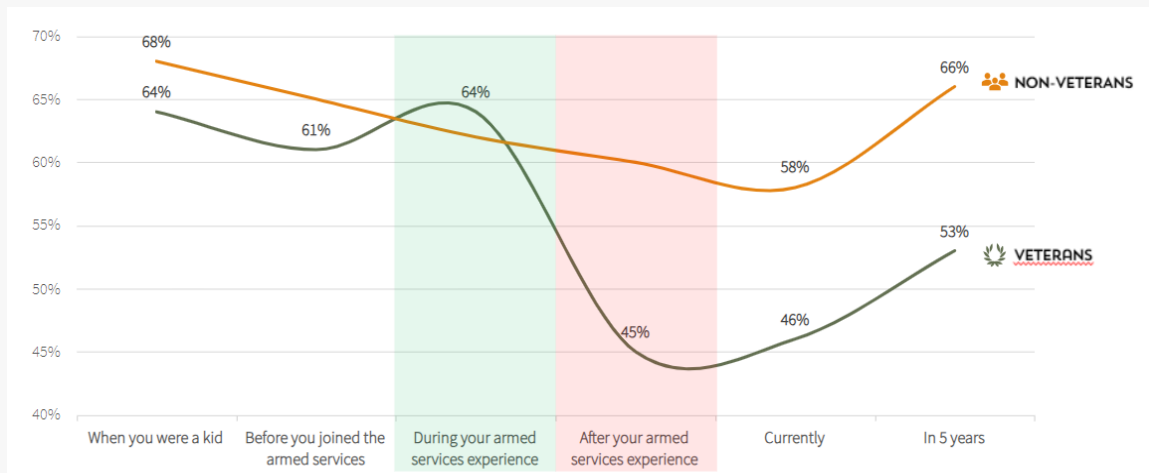
Veterans Well-Being During Life Stages

One of the survey's most notable findings is that veterans' well-being is maintained at high levels during their active service, with more than 3 in 5 (64%) of veterans rating their well-being as excellent or good. However, after military service, veterans' well-being dips to the mid-forties. More than half of veterans are optimistic that their well-being will improve in the next five years (53%) though not as much as non-veterans (66%). Veterans simply do not expect to reach the same level of well-being they had while in the service.

This suggests that the sense of purpose, camaraderie, and support systems provided by the military support well-being. The challenge lies in extending these benefits beyond military service and providing opportunities toward purposeful employment. Further, expanding community programs that mirror the support systems available during service could help sustain veteran well-being as they transition to civilian life.

Well-being at different life stages

Shown: Top 2 Box "Excellent/good"



We defined excellent well-being as having financial stability, being healthy (both physically and mentally), having the ability to have meaningful relationships and possessing a desirable job/career.



Increased Awareness of Mental Health

Awareness about mental health issues among veterans, military spouses, and non-veterans is on the rise. Almost all respondents acknowledge that mental health is just as important as physical health (91%). In conjunction, veterans, non-veterans and employers have seen an increase in their experience with a mental health challenge in the past year. While this growing awareness is a positive foundation for further reducing stigma and increasing access to mental health services, veterans and employers are still experiencing mental health challenges, even more so than they were in 2018.

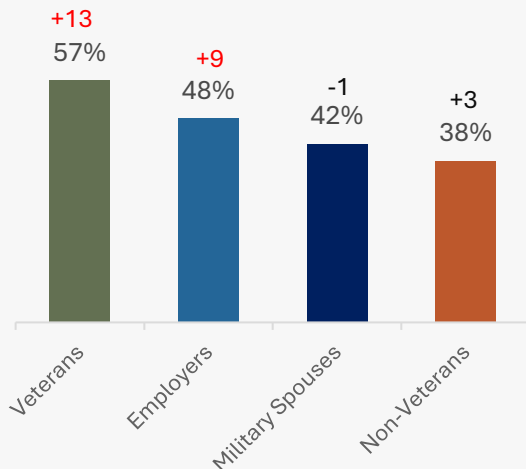
Veterans could benefit from extended support systems post-military service. Programs aimed at promoting mental health literacy and encouraging veterans to engage in self-care practices such as exercise, meditation, and therapy are likely to yield positive outcomes.

91%

OF ALL RESPONDENTS SAY THAT THEY STRONGLY OR SOMEWHAT AGREE THAT THEIR MENTAL WELL-BEING IS AS IMPORTANT AS THEIR PHYSICAL HEALTH.

Experience a mental health challenge in the past year

Shown: Percent that selected "Yes"



Changes vs. 2018 survey outside the margin of error are highlighted in green or red.



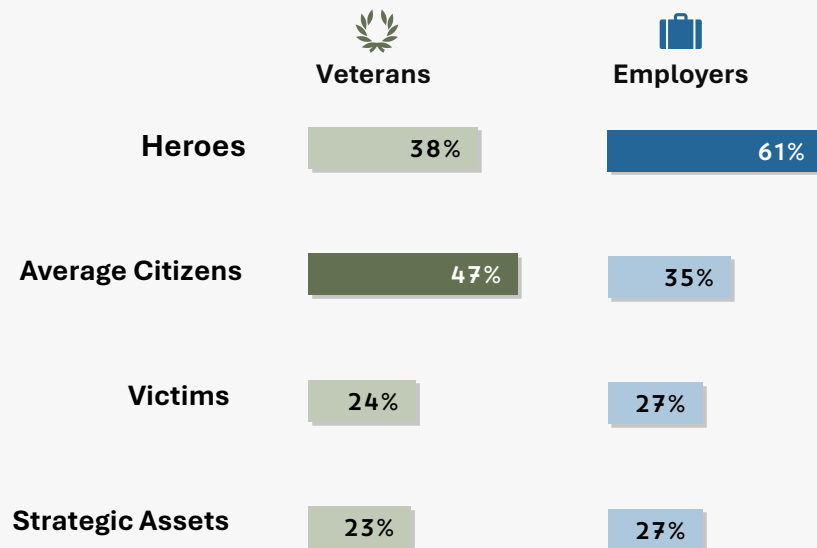
The Undervalued Talent: Perception of Veterans in the Workplace

Though veterans gain many valuable attributes and skills during their time in the service, such as resilience, leadership, problem-solving abilities, and adaptability among others, only 1 in 5 (23%) of veterans and 1 in 4 (27%) of employers believe that veterans are viewed in society as strategic assets. Yet, more than a third (42%) of veterans and a third (32%) of employers understand the importance of portraying them in that way.

The fact that veterans don't think their skills are being utilized at work and employers are unable to find veterans with the skills they are looking for, shows a misunderstanding of skills veterans can bring to the workplace.

How Veterans and Employers View Veterans in society

Shown: Percent selected



Strategic assets as an effective way to portray veterans:	42%	32%
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Addressing Veteran Job Satisfaction and Hiring Challenges

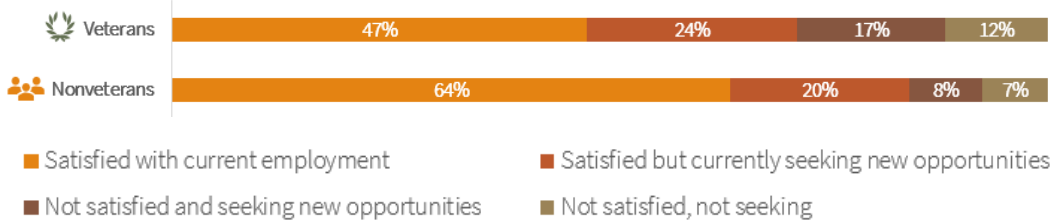
Despite nearly half (47%) of veterans expressing satisfaction with their current jobs, this is notably lower than their non-veteran counterparts, where 64% report job satisfaction. The gap widens further when considering those actively seeking new opportunities regardless of job satisfaction - 41% of veterans are looking for a change, compared to just 29% of non-veterans.

Employers also face a unique set of challenges when it comes to hiring veterans. Many report difficulty in finding candidates who match the skills they are looking for (43%). When veterans apply for jobs, finding the years of relevant experience (31%) and the level of education employers are looking for (31%) can also prove challenging.

Veterans often bring a diverse and valuable set of experiences that can be hard to translate into traditional civilian job requirements. Without the proper support and understanding, both veterans and employers are left grappling with unmet expectations, leading to dissatisfaction on both sides.

This mismatch creates an ongoing cycle of underutilized potential and lost opportunities. Veterans may feel disconnected from their roles or undervalued, while employers miss out on a highly skilled, disciplined, and motivated workforce that could bring tremendous value to their organizations.

Current Job Satisfaction Among Employed Respondents



Top 5 challenges employers have when hiring veterans

1. Finding the skills we are looking for: 43%
2. Receiving enough veteran applicants: 42%
3. Finding the years of relevant experience: 31%
4. Finding the level of education we are looking for: 31%
5. Finding veteran applicants who fit in with our culture: 26%



Unlocking Veteran Potential Through Internships and Apprenticeships

Almost half of Veterans (47%) show an interest in internship or apprenticeship programs but the barrier that will make them unlikely to pursue is immediate financial implications. If that barrier is removed, the number of veterans interested in participating in this type of programs almost doubles (82%).

From an employers' point of view, more than 4 in 5 (84%) believe their companies will benefit from veteran-focused programs like these but less than 1 in 3 (29%) say they actually have programs geared towards veterans.

By working together, government agencies, veteran-focused nonprofits, and employers can create accessible internship and apprenticeship programs that provide veterans with the experience they seek. Given that the vast majority of employers recognize the value of veteran-focused programs, it's critical that more businesses implement these initiatives. Removing financial barriers and expanding opportunities for hands-on experience will not only help veterans bridge the skills gap but also unlock their full potential, benefiting both the veterans and the organizations that hire them.

47%

OF VETERANS SAY THEY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THESE PROGRAMS BUT ARE UNLIKELY TO PURSUE DUE TO IMMEDIATE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS.

29%

OF EMPLOYERS SAY THEY HAVE INTERNSHIP / APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS GEARED TOWARD VETERANS.

84%

OF EMPLOYERS BELIEVE THEIR COMPANIES WOULD BENEFIT FROM THESE PROGRAMS.

82%

OF VETERANS ARE OR WOULD HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THESE TYPE OF PROGRAMS.



Bridging the Gap: Veterans and Civilians Share a Desire for Greater Understanding

When veterans were asked if they believe citizens truly understand the sacrifices military families make to serve their country, only 1 in 5 veterans (20%) agreed. Our survey also revealed a widespread tendency among all our surveyed groups to offer a simple “thank you for your service” when unsure how to engage or approach service members – more than 3 out of 4 respondents (77%) noted.

But there is a lot of signs for hope. Across all groups surveyed, there was a strong desire for change, and a clear willingness to take action. When presented with some ideas on how to bridge the divide, enthusiasm was high. A majority of respondents – regardless of background – believed actions could make a real difference in fostering understanding and connection.

20%

OF VETERANS AGREE THAT AVERAGE CITIZENS UNDERSTAND THE SACRIFICES MILITARY FAMILIES MAKE TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY.

77%

OF ALL GROUPS REPORT THAT PEOPLE TYPICALLY SAY “THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE WHEN THEY AREN’T SURE HOW TO ENGAGE OR APPROACH SERVICE MEMBERS.

ALL GROUPS THINK IT’S IMPACTFUL WHEN NON-VETERANS...

Attend open houses at local veterans' organizations **(78%)**

Work alongside veterans to complete charitable projects **(88%)**

Participate in military immersion/demonstration to observe service members leading, managing and problem solving with their teams **(81%)**



A Call to Action

The 2024 survey provides a hopeful outlook for improving veteran well-being through targeted initiatives that build on veterans' strengths, address challenges, and foster collaboration across sectors. The findings indicate that veterans thrive when given purpose, community, and opportunities for meaningful engagement. By building on the successes during their time in service, society can ensure that veterans continue to flourish after their military careers.

Government agencies, employers, community organizations, and veterans' groups all have a role to play in driving these changes forward by offering more programs for veterans to be a part of and gain experience in the corporate sector while showcasing the experience and skills they've learned in the military to future employers. Together, we can work to ensure that veterans receive the respect, support, and opportunities they need to live fulfilling lives after their service.

For more information about the study and these findings, please contact Katie Carter at katie.carter@edelman.com.

Methodology In-Depth: The Edelman Veterans Well-Being Survey was conducted from May 16 - June 25, 2024. This 20-minute online survey was conducted among n=5,374 respondents, n=1,000 of whom were non-veterans, n=3,679 veterans, n=1,027 employers, n=271 human resources professionals, n=339 educators, n=50 VSOs, and n=507 military spouses. The specific breakdown by group is as follows:

Audience	Description	Sample Size	Margin of Error
Veterans	U.S. adults ages 18+ who currently or have previously served in the armed forces Note: Veterans and active military personnel were analyzed in aggregate. In most instances, there was no significant difference between the groups and, as such, they have been reported in aggregate for this briefing.	N=3,679	+/- 1.62%
Non-veterans/Civilians	U.S. adults ages 18+ with no current or previous military service	N=1,000	+/- 3.10%
Employers	U.S. adults ages 18+ who have input into hiring decisions at their company.	N=1,027	+/- 3.06%
Human Resources Professionals	U.S. adults ages 18+ who work as human resource professionals and have input into hiring decisions at their company.	N=271	+/- 5.95%
Educators	U.S. adults ages 18+ who teach or serve in an administrative capacity in an institution that educates veterans	N=339	+/- 5.32%
VSOs	U.S. adults ages 18+ who work in veteran service organizations and have input into training / assistance for veterans and military personnel	N=50	+/- 13.86%
Military Spouses	U.S. adults ages 18+ who are currently married to someone serving in the armed forces, or to someone who separated from service in the last two years.	N=507	+/- 4.35%

Respondents for the study were sourced from the following:

- Veterans, Employers, HR professionals, Educators, VSOs, and Military Spouses were recruited from lists provided by Hiring Our Heroes, The Road Home, Bob Woodruff Foundation, Pat Tillman Foundation, Student Veterans of America, HRMAC Institute at the Executives Club of Chicago, Blue Star Families and other veterans' organizations.
- Non-veterans, additional educators and additional military spouses were recruited from a paid online panel provided by Veridata.