2022
IAVA MEMBER SURVEY

CASE STUDY REPORT | MARCH 2022
Perceptions and views of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans on the challenges and successes of the next greatest generation of veterans
Who is IAVA?
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) is the premier veterans advocacy and support organization on the planet. Every day, we fight for veterans. We are the tip-of-the-spear non-profit engine of impact that connects, unites, and empowers hundreds of thousands of veterans and allies nationwide.

Founded by an Iraq veteran in 2004, IAVA is the non-partisan leader in advocacy, public awareness, and concierge veteran empowerment. We organize locally and drive historic impacts nationally.

Authors
This year’s member survey report is published as a collaboration between Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of American (IAVA) and Syracuse University’s D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF). The principal author of this report is Adam Pritchard, IVMF, who is responsible for all data analysis presented in this report, along with contributions and insights from Samantha Powell and Travis Horr, IAVA.

Suggested Citation
# Table of Contents

Who is IAVA? ...............................................................................................................................2

A Message from CEO Jeremy Butler ..........................................................................................4

Key Highlights from the 2022 IAVA Member Survey ................................................................5

IAVA Member Profile ..................................................................................................................9

- Demographics.......................................................................................................................10
- Military Service ..................................................................................................................13
- Transition Experiences .......................................................................................................15

Social Issues ............................................................................................................................20

- Political and Civic Engagement .......................................................................................21
- Issues from the Headlines .................................................................................................24
- Women Veterans ...............................................................................................................28
- Gun Ownership and Safety ...............................................................................................29
- Military Sexual Assault and Intimate Violence ..................................................................30

Post-Service Career .................................................................................................................32

- GI Bill and Education .......................................................................................................33
- Employment .......................................................................................................................36

Health & Wellbeing ..................................................................................................................38

- General Health ..................................................................................................................39
- Cannabis ............................................................................................................................42
- Alcohol and Tobacco .........................................................................................................43
- Burn Pits and Toxic Exposure ............................................................................................45
- Mental Health ....................................................................................................................46
- Suicide ..................................................................................................................................47

VA Healthcare ...........................................................................................................................48

- Rating VA Healthcare .......................................................................................................49
- Community Care Program ..................................................................................................52
- VA Disability Benefits ........................................................................................................53
- VA Healthcare Sexual Misconduct ....................................................................................55

Methodology .............................................................................................................................56
A Message from CEO Jeremy Butler

I am so proud of what we have accomplished together this past year - passing the Deborah Sampson Act, bringing changes to US military law to improve justice for victims of military sexual assault and other serious crimes, establishing accountability for predatory schools that profit off of Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries by finally closing the “90/10 loophole” and passing the Afghan War Commission Act, among other great victories! The far-reaching changes that will result from full implementation of regulations to close the “90/10 loophole” are long overdue and have been an IAVA priority for years.

IAVA fought tirelessly for this generation of veterans over the last year, conducting almost 200 Capitol Hill meetings in a time when virtual has been the norm, speaking directly with VA leadership, and executing robust media outreach to highlight the needs of post-9/11 veterans. It has been a humbling, eventful, educational year and I am excited about what is still to come. 2022 is an opportunity to continue to build on our momentum.

IAVA routinely hears from our members on the issues that matter most to them. They come to our, currently virtual, Fly-In and reach out for support via our Quick Reaction Force not only to share their experiences at war but also their experiences at home: difficulties using the GI Bill, navigating VA healthcare, or dealing with symptoms of toxic exposure. Yet, it is our Member Survey that best details the experiences of this generation of veterans. Responses to this year’s survey show a generation of veterans who are thriving. Seventy-five percent have used their post-9/11 GI Bill or transferred their benefits to a dependent, an increase of 13 percent since 2014. Our members are volunteering in their communities at high rates and unemployment is holding steady at five percent.

While post-9/11 veterans are succeeding in their education and careers, our survey also reveals some troubling statistics. Many members report facing significant physical and mental health challenges. Forty-four percent of our members report experiencing suicidal ideation since joining the military, up 13 percent since 2014. Additionally, 64 percent of our members personally know a veteran who has died by suicide—a shocking 26 percent increase since 2014. Meanwhile, a stunning 90 percent of our members report experiencing symptoms that are or might be related to burn pits or toxic exposure.

Our nation needs to step up and support this generation of veterans. Most pressingly, we need to provide health care and benefits to those sickened by toxic exposures and we need to pass the Post 9/11 Mental Health Care Improvement Act. This legislation seeks to improve access to mental health care, expand the mental health workforce and training at VA, and increase mental health research.

Let’s ensure veterans get the healthcare and resources they rightly deserve. This past year was incredible but there is still much to be accomplished. Let’s get it done!

Onward,
Jeremy Butler
Navy Veteran
CEO, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
Key Highlights from the 2022 IAVA Member Survey

The 2022 IAVA Member Survey collected responses from 5,174 IAVA members. The results of this survey are presented in this report. Here are some key highlights from the data collected from IAVA members who responded to the survey.

IAVA Member Profile

IAVA members have served around the world, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Syria, Korea, the Balkans, and other locations globally. They have deployed in every major combat operation since 9/11, and sometimes prior, and represent members of each branch of military service. IAVA’s members continue to serve at home in their communities and through veteran service organizations. The demographics from IAVA’s latest member survey show the diversity of today’s veterans, and their experiences and challenges during transition to civilian life. These results will help to inform policy and practice - ensuring that more veterans can have a smooth transition and successful life after their service.

- Around 3 in 4 IAVA members have served in Iraq, and 2 in 5 in Afghanistan.
- IAVA membership represents the diversity among post-9/11 veterans – including 14% of members who are female, 30% who belong to a non-white racial or ethnic group, and 6% who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Only about half of veterans describe their transition as smooth, with more than 3 in 4 reporting some or many transition challenges.

Social Issues

IAVA members are highly engaged in the politics and issues facing the nation today. From voting to volunteering, veterans are an important voice on many key social and policy topics. IAVA members lead the conversation around mental health and suicide prevention, extremism, COVID-19, firearm regulation, women veterans, military sexual assault, and the Fall 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Political and Civic Engagement

- 70% of IAVA members identify mental health and suicide prevention as a top issue for post-9/11 veterans.
- 98% of IAVA members are registered to vote and 83% are planning to vote in the upcoming midterm election.
- 4 in 5 believe that more veterans in Congress would have a positive impact, and 3 in 10 veterans have themselves considered continuing to serve the country by running for political office.
- 46% of IAVA members volunteer on a regular basis, most often with organizations that support other veterans and their families.
- Only 7% of IAVA members report that they trust political leaders and public officials “a lot” or “a great deal” and only 18% have that level of trust for national news organizations.
• 85% of IAVA members agree that more should have been done to support the evacuation of our Afghan allies during the withdrawal of forces in fall 2021.
• More than half of IAVA members support or have supported the permanent removal or withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan.

Issues from the Headlines
• 85% of IAVA members had received the COVID-19 vaccine, half of whom received it at the VA or a DoD facility.
• 91% of IAVA members agree with expedited U.S. citizenship for military service, and 85% agree with the Special Immigrant Visa Program (SIV) for Iraqi and Afghan allies who worked for U.S. Armed Forces.
• Around one-third of IAVA members report having personally witnessed examples of extremism in the military ranks or among post-9/11 veterans.

Women Veterans
• 85% of IAVA members said it was extremely or very important for IAVA to address issues facing women veterans.
• 48% believe women’s advancement in the military has been limited by past restrictions on women in combat.
• 16% of female IAVA members report feeling unsafe when going to a VA facility.

Gun Ownership and Safety
• 68% of IAVA members own personal firearms.
• 78% of IAVA members support universal background checks for firearm purchases.
• 62% of IAVA members support the distribution of trigger locks.

Military Sexual Assault and Intimate Violence
• 42% of IAVA members believe the DOD is not effectively addressing the problem of military sexual assault, and only 15% believe they are.
• 78% of IAVA members believe that a trained military prosecutor handling sexual assault cases would not impact their view of a commanding officer and 8% believe it would make them view their commander as more of an authority figure.
• 51% of those reporting experiences of military sexual assault said that access to a trained military prosecutor would have made them more likely to report the assault, and only 3% said it would have made them less likely to report.
• 63% of IAVA members think domestic violence is a serious problem within the military community, but only 8% think the VA does enough to support those who experience domestic violence.

Post-Service Career
The success of post-9/11 veterans as they transition into their post-service careers have been shaped by key opportunities like the post-9/11 GI Bill, ensuring that education and employment are accessible for veterans.
2022 MEMBER SURVEY - KEY HIGHLIGHTS

**GI Bill and Education**
- 63% of veterans had enrolled in some form of higher education since separating from the military.
- 71% of veterans who pursued higher education reported using the Post-9/11 GI Bill to support their education after transitioning out of service.
- 73% said they could not afford school without the GI Bill and another 14% were unsure if they could afford school without the GI Bill.

**Employment**
- 81% of veterans reported that they were extremely or somewhat satisfied with their current job.
- 71% of veterans felt they were not underemployed, that is, that they had enough paid work and that their skills and abilities were being fully utilized in their work.
- Among veterans reporting their employment status, 5.1% reported being unemployed and looking for work and another 2.7% were unemployed but not looking for work.
- 17% of veterans experienced an employment status change during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Health and Wellbeing**
- Many post-9/11 veterans experience health challenges that can include issues with physical health, mental health, service-connected disabilities, or the effects of burn pits and other toxic exposures.

**General Health**
- 65% of IAVA members rated their overall health as excellent before joining the military, but only 6% rated their current overall health as excellent.
- 87% said that maintaining their health is extremely or very important.
- 86% of IAVA members reported having experienced a service-connected physical injury or illness, including conditions such as: tinnitus (68%), muscle or joint injuries (67%), chronic pain (63%), or hearing loss (54%).

**Cannabis**
- 44% of IAVA members reported having used cannabis for recreational purposes, 30% for medicinal purposes, and 16% reported having discussed medical cannabis with their current primary care doctor.
- 86% of IAVA members agreed that the VA should allow research into cannabis as a treatment option, and 88% agreed that cannabis should be researched for medicinal use.

**Alcohol and Tobacco**
- 43% of IAVA members reported drinking alcohol at least once per week, with 8% reporting that they consume alcohol every day; of those who drank, 32% reported binge drinking at least one day per month in the past year.
- 58% of IAVA members had ever used tobacco products. Among tobacco users, 27% continue to do so daily and 61% have quit using tobacco products.
Burn Pits and Toxic Exposure
- 82% of IAVA members report that they were exposed to burn pits and/or airborne toxic materials during their service.
- 59% of those reporting exposure to burn pits or airborne toxic materials are registered for the VA’s Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits Registry.

Mental Health
- 61% of IAVA members reported having a service-connected mental health injury, and 3 in 4 of those reporting a mental health injury are currently seeking care for it.
- Among those not currently seeking care, 29% are not because they have not found a mental health professional that understands their needs.

Suicide
- 61% of IAVA members believe we are not making progress as a nation in combating military/veteran suicide, and 17% believe we are making progress.
- 67% of IAVA members believe that the military/veteran community are not getting the care they need for mental health injuries.
- 68% IAVA members personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has attempted suicide, and 64% personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has died by suicide.

VA Healthcare
Veterans and their families rely on the VA and its many other benefits programs to provide the best quality healthcare and assistance possible.
- 84% of veterans are enrolled in VA healthcare, and 60% rated their overall experience with VA healthcare as excellent or good.
- 31% of veterans have used the VA Community Care Program, and 61% rated the Community Care Program as excellent or good.

VA Disability Benefits
- 80% of veterans have a service-connected disability rating from VA.
- About half (48%) of the disability claims that are still pending have been pending for over 1 year.
- Of claims with a decision, 68% of claimants were satisfied with the outcome.

VA Healthcare Sexual Misconduct
- 16% of female and 10% of male veterans report not feeling safe when going to a VA facility.
- 7% of veterans report having witnessed or personally heard about someone else experiencing sexual misconduct while seeking care at VA.
- 3.5% or veterans reported having experienced sexual harassment, and 0.8% reported experiencing sexual assault while seeking care at the VA.
IAVA’s members continue to serve at home in their communities and through veteran service organizations. The demographics from IAVA’s latest member survey show the diversity of today’s veterans and their experiences and challenges during transition to civilian life. These results will help to inform policy and practice - ensuring that more veterans can have a smooth transition and successful life after their service.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Around 3 in 4 IAVA members have served in Iraq, and 2 in 5 have served in Afghanistan.
- IAVA membership is representative of the diversity among post-9/11 veterans – including 14% of members who are female, 30% who belong to a non-white racial or ethnic group, and 6% who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Only about half of veterans describe their transition as smooth, with more than 3 in 4 reporting some or many transition challenges.
Demographics

What is your age?

- 0-10: 7%
- 11-20: 1%
- 21-30: 8%
- 31-40: 22%
- 41-50: 18%
- 51-65: 13%
- Above 65: 29%

What is your gender?

- Male: 82%
- Female: 14%
- Other: 2%

What is your religious affiliation?

- Christian: 59%
- Agnostic: 11%
- Other: 11%
- Jewish: 1.5%
- Muslim: 0.6%
- Hindu: 0.1%
- Pagan: 1.5%
- Spiritual: 1.2%

How do you describe yourself? (select all that apply)

- White: 78%
- Black or African American: 8%
- Hispanic, Latino or Spanish: 12%
- American Indian or AK Native: 4%
- Asian: 4%
- Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 1%
- Other: 5%

What is your marital status?

- Married/Domestic Partnership: 71%
- Divorced/Separated: 17%
- Single, never married: 11%
- Widowed: 1%

How many children do you have?

- One child: 16%
- Two children: 28%
- Three children: 17%
- Four or more: 15%
- No children: 24%

Has your spouse served in the military?

- Yes: 19%
  - 3.4% Currently Active Duty
  - 13.1% Veterans
  - 2.3% National Guard or Reserve

Do you identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community?

- Yes: 6%
- No: 94%
Which best describes where you currently live?

- **25% Urban**
  - In a major city

- **51% Suburban**
  - A smaller community close to a major city

- **24% Rural**
  - Away from any major city

98% live in the U.S.

U.S. Census Regions

What is the highest degree you have completed?

- Professional degree (e.g., MD, JD) - 4%
- Doctoral degree (PhD) - 2%
- Master’s degree - 28%
- Bachelor’s degree in college (4-year) - 29%
- Associate degree in college (2-year) - 12%
- Vocational, tech, or trade school - 5%
- Some college but no degree - 17%
- High school graduate or GED - 4%
- Some high school, no degree - 0%

How much was your total personal income in 2020?

- More than $150,000 - 10%
- $100,000 - $149,999 - 19%
- $90,000 - $99,999 - 6%
- $80,000 - $89,999 - 8%
- $70,000 - $79,999 - 9%
- $60,000 - $69,999 - 9%
- $50,000 - $59,999 - 10%
- $40,000 - $49,999 - 10%
- $30,000 - $39,999 - 8%
- $20,000 - $29,999 - 4%
- $10,000 - $19,999 - 3%
- Less than $10,000 - 2%
Total 2020 personal income by highest education completed

### Master’s, Doctoral or Professional

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<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>7%</td>
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### Bachelor’s Degree

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### Vocational, Technical, Trade or Associate’s

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### Some College or Less

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<td>Less than $30,000</td>
<td>14%</td>
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Military Service

In which branch(es) did you serve?

- Army or Guard/Reserve: 59%
- Navy or Reserve: 15%
- Marine Corps or Reserve: 15%
- Air Force or Guard/Reserve (or Space Force): 16%
- Coast Guard or Reserve: 1%

What is/was your highest rank?

- Enlisted: 77%
- Officer: 23%

- 46% of officers were prior enlisted
- 64% of officers were not prior enlisted

How many times have you deployed?

- 0: 3%
- 1: 28%
- 2: 26%
- 3: 15%
- 4: 8%
- 5+: 16%

Where have you served on Active Duty?

- Iraq: 74%
- Afghanistan: 40%
- Other Middle East: 29%
- Other Southwest Asia: 20%
- Africa: 10%
- Central or South America: 9%
- Syria: 1%
- Other: 23%

Other locations include the Balkans, Europe, Korea, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

78% of Guard/Reserve had deployed over 30 days (activated)
Why did you join the military? Top five reasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defend your country / A desire to serve your country</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of purpose</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A history of service in your family</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New experiences / adventure / travel</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education benefits</td>
<td>40%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Overall, was joining the military a good decision for you personally?

- Completely: 75%
- Moderately: 17%
- Neutral: 5%
- Slightly: 2%
- Not at all: 1%

How likely are you to recommend military service to a family member or friend?

- Promoter: 42%
- Passive: 28%
- Other: 2%
- Detractor: 30%

Recommended 7.4 out of 10 on average

Years of service from joining the military to separation.

- Median Year Entering the Service: 1997
- Median Year Separating from Service: 2011

Median 15 Years

20th%: 6
40th%: 10
50th%: 19
60th%: 24
80th%: 24
Transition Experiences

How would you describe your overall transition from active duty to veteran status?

- Very smooth: 8%
- Smooth: 39%
- Difficult: 38%
- Very difficult: 15%

Did you experience challenges when transitioning out of the military?

- Many: 44%
- Somewhat: 33%
- Very little: 16%
- None: 7%

Did you currently experience any challenges related to your military service?

- Very little: 24%
- Somewhat: 37%
- Many: 21%
- None: 18%

Using the following scale, how prepared were you to successfully navigate the following...?

- Access to post-service education: 17%
- Transition from military to civilian life: 12%
- Transition to post-service employment: 15%
- Healthcare and benefits system: 11%
- Resources in local community: 8%

- Very prepared: 19%
- Somewhat prepared: 23%
- Neither prepared nor unprepared: 20%
- Somewhat unprepared: 20%
- Very unprepared: 31%
Biggest challenges faced when transitioning out of the military.

- **44%** Loss of identity / purpose
- **38%** Relating to non-veterans / re-integrating with community
- **34%** Readjusting to social life
- **26%** Health concerns
- **25%** Finding / keeping employment
- **18%** Isolation from unit / servicemembers

Were you prepared to manage your finances immediately after your transition out of the military?

- **65%** Yes
- **35%** No

Do you think your current financial situation is better than, about the same as, or worse than others your age?

- **41%** Better
- **39%** About the same
- **20%** Worse

74% Own a home or mortgage

22% Rent

In a typical month, does your current monthly income cover basic necessary expenses (e.g., housing, food, clothing, and transportation):

- **21%** With difficulty
- **24%** Fairly easily
- **22%** Easily
- **33%** Very easily

15% Some difficulty

4% Great difficulty

2% Not enough

23% of veterans Did not have a permanent place to live when they transitioned out of the military:

77% Couchsurfed with friends or family

Time without a permanent place to live:

- A few days: 8%
- A few weeks: 16%
- A few months: 30%
- Six months to a year: 24%
- Longer than a year: 22%
### IAVA Member Profile – Transition Experiences

#### Upon separating, did you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Move back to home of record</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay near last duty station</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Were your married at the time of your transition out of the military?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Yes, to a former spouse</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, to my current spouse</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32%</td>
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### Transition Experiences and Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have matured as a result of my military service</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt/pride from my accomplishments during my military service</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was successful in overcoming the challenges I faced in my transition</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was helpful having my spouse be a part of the transition process</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a successful transition into civilian life</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having my spouse gainfully employed helped me successfully transition</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like a valued member of my community</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a sense of purpose when I left the military</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a sense of belonging in my community</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
43% Participated or are currently participating in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

53% of veterans transitioned in 2011 or later

62% Would like to have ongoing access to training material from TAP after separation

Did you use what you learned from TAP during your transition?

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

3.1 out of 5

Average rating of experience in the Transition Assistance Program

Year participating in TAP

Did you use any programs and services beyond the core TAP curriculum?

- Job skills program: 26%
- Career planning and exploration services: 17%
- Help navigating community services: 12%
- Job training and credentialing program: 12%
- Entrepreneurship training: 6%
- I did not use additional programs: 63%

Compared to the core TAP curriculum, these programs were:

- More helpful: 36%
- About as helpful: 56%
- Less helpful: 8%
237 member survey participants were Current Active Duty and shared their separation plans with us:

When do you plan to transition out of the military?

- Within the next 6 months: 83%
- Within the next 6-12 months: 87%
- Within the next 2 years: 67%
- Over 2 years: 58%
- Unsure: 31%

Have you planned for your transition out of the military?

- Yes: 18%
- Move back to home of record: 23%
- Stay near last duty station: 31%
- Neither: 28%
- I don’t know: 31%

Upon separation, will you:

- 45% of current active duty participants have participated in TAP

How familiar are you with the public benefits available to you as you transition out of the military?

- Extremely familiar: 6%
- Very familiar: 21%
- Moderately familiar: 45%
- Slightly familiar: 17%
- Not familiar at all: 11%

Top 5 Expected transition challenges of active duty participants

- 57% Difficulty navigating VA benefits
- 40% Loss of identity / purpose
- 39% Health concerns (mental or physical)
- 38% Finding / keeping employment as a civilian
- 35% Relating to non-veterans / reintegrating
IAVA members are highly engaged in the politics and issues facing the nation today. From voting to volunteering, veterans are leading voices on many key social and policy needs. IAVA members lead the conversation around mental health and suicide prevention, extremism, COVID-19, firearm regulation, women veterans, military sexual assault, and the Fall 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan.

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS**

- IAVA members recognize the importance of political participation – 98% are registered to vote, 4 in 5 believe that more veterans in Congress would have a positive impact, and 3 in 10 IAVA members have considered running for political office to continue serving the country.
- About 1 in 3 IAVA members reports having personally witnessed examples of extremism among the ranks of the military and post-9/11 veterans.
- Two-thirds of IAVA members own personal firearms, 78% support universal background checks for firearm purchases, and 62% support the distribution of trigger locks.
- Only around 1 in 7 IAVA members (15%) believe that DOD is effectively addressing military sexual assault – 42% say no and 43% are unsure. However, 4 in 5 IAVA members felt that involving a trained military prosecutor would not undermine their commanding officer. Half of those experiencing military sexual assault felt that access to a trained military prosecutor would have made them more likely to report their incident and only 3% said it would make them less likely to report.
Political and Civic Engagement

**98%** are registered to vote

**83%** Are “definitely” planning to vote in the 2022 midterm elections

**With what political party do you affiliate?**

- Independent / No party affiliation: 39%
- Democratic Party: 22%
- Republican Party: 31%
- Libertarian Party: 5%
- Other: 3%

**Preferred voting method**

- In person on election day: 51%
- In person early: 19%
- Absentee or mail: 28%
- Other: 2%

**Top issues when considering your support of a political candidate:**

- Veterans’ issues: 47%
- Economy: 36%
- Gun control / 2nd Amendment rights: 27%
- Military / Defense issues: 24%

**Most significant challenges to your ability to run for public office (top responses)**

- Lack of financial resources: 58%
- Need help growing your political network: 30%
- Personal or family circumstances: 28%
- Need more knowledge of fundraising strategies: 23%
- Need more knowledge of campaign management: 22%

**What impact do you think having more veterans in Congress would have on the ability of Congress to address national issues?**

- Positive impact: 82%
- Neutral impact: 16%
- Negative impact: 1%
In your opinion, what are the three most important issues to post-9/11 veterans?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental health and suicide prevention</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment and jobs</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxic exposures including burn pits</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the following most closely resembles your opinion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President Biden acts in the interest of veterans</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress acts in the interest of veterans</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American public supports veterans</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American public understands veterans’ sacrifices</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers see value in hiring veterans</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Selective Service**
  - Ending the Selective Service enrollment process (used in the event of a draft) for male U.S. citizens turning 18 years old.
  - 14% Strongly agree, 9% Somewhat agree, 21% Neither, 20% Somewhat disagree, 37% Strongly disagree

  - Maintaining the Selective Service with the inclusion of women U.S. citizens turning 18 years old in the enrollment process.
  - 46% Strongly agree, 24% Somewhat agree, 14% Neither, 5% Somewhat disagree, 11% Strongly disagree

- **Immigration and Citizenship**
  - Currently, military service can serve as a way to expedite the pathway to U.S. citizenship. What is your opinion of this policy?
  - 71% Strongly agree, 20% Somewhat agree, 6% Neither, 2% Somewhat disagree, 1% Strongly disagree

  - The Special Immigrant Visa Program (SIV) is for certain Iraqi and Afghan nationals who have worked for U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq or Afghanistan (as contractors, translators, interpreters, etc.) to emigrate to the United States. What is your opinion of this policy?
  - 57% Strongly agree, 28% Somewhat agree, 9% Neither, 4% Somewhat disagree, 2% Strongly disagree

  - Under current immigration law, non-citizens may be deported after committing a crime, regardless of veteran status or military service. What is your opinion of this law?
  - 23% Strongly agree, 20% Somewhat agree, 15% Neither, 23% Somewhat disagree, 20% Strongly disagree
Post-9/11 veterans stand out for their desire to continue to serve and give back once they return home. Many IAVA members have discovered the psychological, emotional, and social benefits from serving in their local communities.

**How many hours per month do you spend volunteering?**

- More than 10 hours: 28%
- 5-10 hours: 24%
- 3-5 hours: 31%
- 1-2 hours: 17%
- 0 hours: 1%

**Which issues do you focus your volunteer work on?**

- Serving veterans, active duty servicemembers, and their families: 59%
- Youth: 41%
- Helping older people: 26%
- Addressing poverty and homelessness: 21%
- Disaster relief: 13%
- Environmental conservation: 11%
- Political: 9%
- Other: church, community, first responders, animal welfare: 22%

**How important is it for you to interact regularly with other veterans and military servicemembers?**

- Very important: 42%
- Somewhat important: 38%
- Neither: 16%
- Somewhat unimportant: 3%
- Very unimportant: 2%

**How do you interact with other veterans and military servicemembers?**

- 53% social media
- 40% at work
- 29% meet-ups
- 39% daily life
- 17% social clubs
- 36% telephone
- 13% I rarely interact with other veterans
Issues from the Headlines

IAVA members are engaged with the news of the day and have varying degrees of trust and support for political figures and institutions. This survey was fielded between 9/3/2021 and 10/31/2021, immediately following the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

**In all, do you think our engagement in Iraq was worth it, or not?**

- Worth it: 21%
- Somewhat worth it: 28%
- Neither: 14%
- Somewhat not worth it: 11%
- Not worth it: 26%

**In all, do you think our engagement in Afghanistan was worth it, or not?**

- Worth it: 23%
- Somewhat worth it: 29%
- Neither: 13%
- Somewhat not worth it: 12%
- Not worth it: 24%

**Views on the Afghanistan withdrawal**

- I support or have supported the permanent removal or withdrawal of US forces in Afghanistan: 35%
- I approve of the way President Biden removed forces and personnel from Afghanistan in August 2021: 9%
- More should have been done to support the evacuation of our Afghan allies during the withdrawal: 69%

**As a servicemember/veteran, how supported did you feel during the Afghanistan withdrawal and aftermath by the following groups?**

- VA: 15% Very supported, 23% Somewhat supported, 31% Neither, 10% Somewhat unsupported, 22% Very unsupported
- My employer: 17% Very supported, 20% Somewhat supported, 40% Neither, 7% Somewhat unsupported, 17% Very unsupported
- The American public: 5% Very supported, 23% Somewhat supported, 27% Neither, 20% Somewhat unsupported, 24% Very unsupported
- DOD or military leadership: 6% Very supported, 15% Somewhat supported, 25% Neither, 14% Somewhat unsupported, 39% Very unsupported
- My school: 10% Very supported, 12% Somewhat supported, 49% Neither, 7% Somewhat unsupported, 23% Very unsupported
- The media: 3% Very supported, 11% Somewhat supported, 22% Neither, 17% Somewhat unsupported, 48% Very unsupported
When making the decision whether or not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, whose advice did you value most? (Select up to 3 options)

- Healthcare professional: 73%
- Personal Research: 63%
- Family/Friends: 30%
- Military and VA leadership: 14%
- Non-news media personality: 4%
- News media personality: 3%
- Social Media: 1%

Where did you receive your COVID-19 vaccine?

- VA or DOD facility: 49%
- Pharmacy: 14%
- Civilian hospital: 11%
- State vaccination site: 19%
- Other: 7%

How much do you trust the accuracy of the political news and information you get from:

- Your main news source: 21% A great deal, 23% A lot, 32% A moderate amount, 12% A little, 13% Not at all
- Friends and family: 6% A great deal, 14% A lot, 40% A moderate amount, 30% A little, 10% Not at all
- National news organizations: 4% A great deal, 14% A lot, 30% A moderate amount, 24% A little, 28% Not at all
- Political leaders and public officials: 2% A great deal, 5% A lot, 26% A moderate amount, 32% A little, 36% Not at all
- Social media sites: 1% A great deal, 11% A lot, 25% A moderate amount, 62% A little, 2% Not at all

Do you think your main news source mentioned above is part of the mainstream media?

- Yes: 69%
- No: 31%

Do you think your main news source presents the news in a different way from most media outlets?

- Yes: 62%
- No: 38%
Do you think there is a serious problem of extremism within the military ranks?

- Yes: 35%
- Not enough info to determine: 31%
- No: 34%

Do you think there is a serious problem of extremism among post-9/11 veterans?

- Yes: 32%
- Not enough info to determine: 29%
- No: 39%

**32%**
Have personally witnessed examples of extremism within the ranks of the military

**32%**
Have personally witnessed examples of extremism among post-9/11 veterans

---

Extremism Views by Political Party Affiliation

**Do you think there is a serious problem of extremism within the military ranks?**

- Independent: 37% Yes, 34% No, 30% Not enough info to determine
- Republican: 13% Yes, 30% No, 57% Not enough info to determine
- Democrat: 68% Yes, 26% No, 6% Not enough info to determine

**Have you personally witnessed examples of extremism within the military ranks?**

- Independent: 34% Yes, 66% No
- Republican: 14% Yes, 86% No
- Democrat: 55% Yes, 45% No

---

**Do you think there is a serious problem of extremism among post-9/11 veterans?**

- Independent: 32% Yes, 34% No, 34% Not enough info to determine
- Republican: 12% Yes, 26% No, 63% Not enough info to determine
- Democrat: 63% Yes, 28% No, 8% Not enough info to determine

**Have you personally witnessed examples of extremism among post-9/11 veterans?**

- Independent: 34% Yes, 66% No
- Republican: 13% Yes, 87% No
- Democrat: 56% Yes, 44% No
What is your opinion on allowing openly transgender persons to participate in military service?

- Strongly agree: 26%
- Somewhat agree: 13%
- Neither: 22%
- Somewhat disagree: 11%
- Strongly disagree: 27%

Have you ever been impacted by cybercrimes, and did you report them?

- Yes, but I did not report it: 10%
- No, not impacted: 66%
- Yes, I reported it: 24%

Main types of cybercrimes affecting military and veteran families:
- Imposter scams
- Financial / purchase scams
- Hacked accounts / devices
- Identity theft
- Cyberbullying / harassment / stalking

Do you believe you have experienced predatory loan practices?

- Maybe: 13%
- No: 68%
- Yes: 19%

Predatory lending is generally defined as:
- Imposing unfair or abusive loan terms on borrowers through deceptive, unfair, or fraudulent practices

Under what conditions did your loan occur?

- Car: 37%
- Advance Pay-Day: 33%
- Home: 23%
- Other: 31%
Women Veterans

Women represent the fastest-growing subset of the veteran population. In 2017, IAVA launched our groundbreaking campaign, #SheWhoBorneTheBattle, focused on recognizing the service of women veterans and closing gaps in care provided to them by the VA. We continue to fight for recognition and improved care for all the women veterans who have served or will serve our country.

Women make up 14% of IAVA Membership Veterans

How important do you think it is for IAVA to address issues facing women veterans?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Moderately Important</th>
<th>Slightly Important</th>
<th>Not at all Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The VA motto: “To care for him who has borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.”

The motto was chosen 59 years ago and based on President Abraham Lincoln’s second inaugural address in 1865.

What is your opinion on changing the motto to be more inclusive of all who have served?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you think women's advancement in the military has been limited by past restrictions on women in combat?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you believe that lifting the restrictions on women in combat has improved the public recognition of their military contributions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IAVA Member Survey
Gun Ownership and Safety

It is a powerful and often politicized topic in today's environment, but firearm ownership and storage is a particularly important topic in the veteran community. IAVA members overwhelmingly support universal background checks, but do not support banning assault style weapons or high capacity magazines. Firearm safety and storage is a continuing topic of conversation in the veteran community, particularly how access to lethal means is related to suicide.

68% of IAVA Membership Survey Participants own Personal Firearm(s)

Please select your primary method of storage for your firearm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Loaded</th>
<th>Unloaded, ammo stored separately</th>
<th>Unloaded, no ammo in home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locked away</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlocked</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would rather not say</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universal background checks for individuals purchasing firearms</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of trigger locks at medical centers, sporting good/gun stores and community centers</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing concealed carry without a permit</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortening waiting periods for buying firearms legally</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banning high-capacity magazines</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banning assault-style firearms</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of community lockers as a means to safely store weapons outside of the home</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Military Sexual Assault and Intimate Violence

Military sexual trauma affects an estimated one in four women veterans and one in one hundred male veterans, according to VA. While there has been much attention on the issue from Department of Defense and VA, sexual assault continues to plague the services. By better understanding the past experience of these survivors, IAVA is dedicated to understanding the experiences of survivors so that we can better advocate for policies that will stop sexual assault in the future.

Do you believe the Department of Defense is effectively addressing the problem of military sexual assault?

Currently, the final decision to send someone to court martial for military sexual assault lies with the commanding officer.

If this decision was instead given to a trained military prosecutor, would you view the commander as:

Have you ever been in an intimate relationship in which...

When did this happen:

34% In the military
33% As a veteran
34% Both

Do you think domestic violence is a serious problem within the military?

Do you think the VA does enough to support veterans or spouses who experience domestic violence?
12% of IAVA Membership Survey Participants are survivors of military sexual assault.

Survivors are:
- 30% Male
- 70% Female

4% of men and 58% of women report having experienced sexual assault or things like unwanted touching, someone exposing themselves, or unwanted sexual contact.

Sexual assault incidents were reported to authorities by:
- 24% of the men
- 37% of the women

Only 34% reported the incident.

63% of those who reported experienced retaliation after reporting.

47% of men and 67% of women reported retaliation after reporting the incident.

If you did not report the incident, why did you not report this?

- Did not think anything would be done: 70%
- Fear of retaliation by my peers or chain of command: 56%
- Concerned about impact on my career: 55%
- Doubt that my chain of command would believe me: 51%
- Concerned that my peers would treat me differently: 49%
- Did not want to be involved in an investigation: 47%
- Worried I was less valued than person who did it: 34%
- Worried that people would think I was weak: 33%
- Worried family or friends would treat me differently: 17%
- Other reason: 17%

If instead of your commander, a trained military prosecutor had the authority to make the decision to move forward with your case, which of the following impacts would it have had on your decision to report?

- 51%: I would have been more likely to report
- 46%: It would not have made a difference in my decision
- 3%: I would have been less likely to report
The opportunities of post-9/11 veterans as they transition into their post-service careers have been shaped by key opportunities like the post-9/11 GI Bill, making education possible for veterans and their dependents. In this section, IAVA members report their experiences with understanding, accessing, and using these important benefits.

Veterans also describe their employment situation as the nation continues to navigate the economic impact of COVID-19. At the time of the survey, members reported a 5.1% unemployment rate (those looking for work), significantly higher than the national unemployment rate of 3.9%, and another 2.7% were unemployed but not looking for work (“discouraged workers”). This section highlights the importance of education, veteran-friendly employers, and entrepreneurship to veterans’ post-service lives and work.

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS**

- Around 1 in 7 IAVA members (14%) are currently enrolled in a higher education program; 63% of veterans have enrolled in higher education since separating from the military and 74% of active-duty members have pursued a degree since joining.
- Only 1 in 8 veterans (13%) reported feeling like they could afford higher education without the GI Bill – 73% said no and 14% were unsure.
- Around 3 in 10 veterans considered themselves underemployed, that is, not having enough paid work or not doing enough work that makes full use of their skills or abilities.
- Veteran entrepreneurs made up 6% of survey participants, and 16% of non-business owners were planning to start their own business or non-profit enterprise.
GI Bill and Education

Are you eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)?
- Yes: 72%
- Unsure: 13%
- No: 16%

Since separating from the military, have you enrolled in any form of higher education?
- Yes: 63%
- No: 37%

Did you graduate?
- Yes: 75%
- No: 25%

14% of IAVA Membership Survey Participants are currently enrolled in an education program for a certificate or degree.

Have you pursued a degree since joining the military?
- Yes: 74%
- No: 26%

Did you graduate?
- Yes: 92%
- No: 8%

What type of school are you/did you attend? (select all that apply)
- State/public university: 44%
- Private college or university: 34%
- Community college: 26%
- Private for-profit: 13%
- Technical institute or trade school: 11%

Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with your educational program(s):
- Extremely satisfied: 41%
- Somewhat satisfied: 39%
- Neither: 9%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 7%
- Extremely dissatisfied: 4%
Could you afford school without the GI Bill?

- Unsure: 14%
- No: 73%
- Yes: 13%

Post-9/11 GI Bill

- 71% have used for self
- 11% dependents have used
- 73% combined have used

Which, if any, of the following VA Educational Benefits did you use to support your education after transitioning out of service? (select all that apply)

- Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33): 71%
- Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30): 21%
- VA Vocational Rehabilitation (Chapter 31): 17%
- Private or federal student loans: 4%
- Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP): 5%
- Other: 7%
- None of the Above: 7%

How important is the Post-9/11 GI Bill for the following:

- Successful transition / reintegration of veterans into civilian life:
  - Extremely important: 56%
  - Somewhat important: 28%
  - Moderately important: 11%
  - Slightly important: 4%
  - Not at all important: 3%

- Military recruitment:
  - Extremely important: 47%
  - Somewhat important: 32%
  - Moderately important: 16%
  - Slightly important: 8%
  - Not at all important: 7%

- Military retention:
  - Extremely important: 36%
  - Somewhat important: 26%
  - Moderately important: 23%
  - Slightly important: 8%
  - Not at all important: 7%

Which, if any, do you believe best improves veteran education outcomes? (select all that apply)

- In-state tuition for out-of-state veterans at public colleges and universities: 76%
- Veterans success centers at colleges and universities: 66%
- Paid internships / fellowship programs: 60%
- Job search preparation programs: 57%
- VA work study programs: 47%
- Veterans only dormitory housing: 16%

Schools provided enough information for you to get the most out of:

- GI Bill benefits:
  - Agree: 53%
  - Neutral: 19%
  - Disagree: 28%

- Yellow Ribbon Program:
  - Agree: 35%
  - Neutral: 27%
  - Disagree: 38%
POST-SERVICE CAREER – GI BILL AND EDUCATION

11% Of dependents have used
17% Of dependents have not used but intend to

Did your dependent graduate?

58% Yes
24% Still in school
18% No

Overall, how would you rate your dependent’s experience with the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

81% Excellent or good
4% 2%

Of the 17% of veterans with private or federal student loans: How much debt have you accrued through student loans?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Above $100,000</th>
<th>$50,001 to $100,000</th>
<th>$20,001 to $50,000</th>
<th>$15,001 to $20,000</th>
<th>$10,001 to $15,000</th>
<th>$5,001 to $10,000</th>
<th>$1,001 to $5,000</th>
<th>Under $1,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57% of those with loans owe $20,000 or more in student loans.

That amounts to 9% of all survey participants.

Was the cost of your education worth it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completely</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

45% Used loans
35% Did not use loans

Select the top three reasons why you chose your institution(s):

Top Reasons

48% Acceptance of GI Bill benefits
37% Veteran-friendly institution
34% Offering of specific program
36% Location in relation to my home
26% Availability of online courses
Employment

Which best describes your current employment situation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time (35+ hours per week)</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time (under 35 hours/week)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, currently looking for work</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, not currently looking for work</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired (no longer employed)</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled or otherwise unable to work</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collected between 9/3/21 and 10/28/21

17% experienced an employment status change due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Those impacted by COVID-19 are:

- 3.9 times more likely to be unemployed
- 2.8 times more likely to be part-time

Which best describes your current or most recent employer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profit company or organization</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit organization</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government sector</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal government civilian employee</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government (e.g. city or county school district)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State government (including state colleges/Universities)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed or other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner of incorporated business, practice, or farm</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner of unincorporated business, practice, or farm</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you consider yourself currently underemployed?

No 71%

29%

Yes

Underemployment is defined as not having enough paid work or not doing enough work that makes full use of your skills or abilities

Considering everything, are you satisfied with your current job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely satisfied</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why are you satisfied with your job?

- Compensation: 57%
- Work-life balance: 54%
- Environment and/or people: 50%

Why aren’t you satisfied with your job?

- Job does not use my skills: 51%
- Environment and/or people: 50%
- Compensation: 41%
**POST-SERVICE CAREER – EMPLOYMENT**

**5.1% were unemployed and currently looking for work**

Note: The Bureau of Labor statistics reported a 4.8% unemployment rate for veterans in October 2021 when this survey was conducted.

For how long have you been unemployed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 weeks</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 10 weeks</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 14 weeks</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 26 weeks</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 27 weeks</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2.7% were unemployed and not looking for work**

What is the main reason you are not looking for work? (select all that apply)

- **36%** In school or training
- **33%** Family responsibilities
- **32%** Mental health concerns
- **22%** Physical health concerns
- **23%** Child care conflicts

What is the main challenge you have faced in finding work? (select all that apply)

- **42%** Lacking required education/certificates
- **40%** Current economic situation in the U.S.
- **37%** Competing with candidates who have been in the workforce longer
- **34%** Employers avoid hiring veterans
- **34%** Explaining how military skills translate
- **33%** Medical challenges - mental
- **31%** Medical challenges - physical

**16%** of those who are not business owners are planning to start their own business or non-profit enterprise

**68%** of those planning to start a business are not aware of VA / Dept of Labor small business support programs

**What challenges do you anticipate for starting your business/non-profit?**

- Startup capital: 75%
- Operating costs: 54%
- Navigating federal or state regulations: 43%
- Taxes and legal fees: 40%
- Current economic situation: 38%

**Did you receive support/training for transitioning to the civilian workforce before leaving the military?**

- Yes: 73%
- No: 27%

**Did you have a job secured before you left the military?**

- Yes: 68%
- No: 32%

**How long were you without a job after transitioning out of the military?**

- Less than 3 months: 27%
- 3 to 6 months: 21%
- From 6 to 9 months: 10%
- From 9 to 12 months: 7%
- Over 12 months: 21%
- Never unemployed: 3%
- Opted to attend school: 12%
Many post-9/11 veterans experience health challenges after separating from the military – over 53,000 servicemembers have been wounded in action in Iraq and Afghanistan, including 86% of IAVA members who have continuing issues such as illnesses from toxic exposures, traumatic brain injury, and post-traumatic stress. Mental health injuries impact the post-9/11 generation at an alarming rate. Ensuring access to effective treatment options for mental health injuries is paramount to the long-term health of post-9/11 veterans.

Many of these issues can be exacerbated by substance abuse. IAVA applauds the efforts of DoD and VA in their efforts to reduce alcohol and tobacco consumption by military personnel and veterans.

IAVA is committed to ensuring that veterans receive the same level of care as their civilian counterparts. To this end, IAVA members sound off on alternative therapies such as cannabis.

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS**

- 86% of IAVA members report a service-connected physical injury or illness, and 61% report a service-connected mental health injury.
- About two-thirds of IAVA members have used alternative therapies to treat service-connected injuries; 7 in 10 veterans have at least some interest in cannabis or cannabinoid products as a treatment option if it were available.
- 82% of IAVA members report that during their service they were exposed to burn pits and/or airborne toxic materials. Around half have had their exposure documented in a Periodic Health Assessment or other report (53%), and 59% are registered with the VA’s Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits Registry.
- More than two-thirds of IAVA members personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has attempted suicide, and 64% know a post-9/11 veteran who has died by suicide.
HEALTH AND WELLBEING – GENERAL HEALTH

General Health

How would you rate your overall health before you joined the military?

- Excellent: 65%
- Good: 26%
- Average: 8%
- Poor: 1%
- Terrible: 0%

How do you rate your current overall health?

- Excellent: 27%
- Good: 37%
- Average: 27%
- Poor: 27%
- Terrible: 4%

How important is maintaining your health to you?

- Extremely important: 49%
- Very important: 38%
- Moderately important: 11%
- Slightly important: 0%
- Not at all important: 1%

Have you experienced a service-connected physical injury or illness?

- Yes: 86%
- No: 14%

Did you sustain any of the following injuries or illnesses as a result of your service? (select all that apply)

- Tinnitus: 68%
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): 67%
- Musculoskeletal/joint injuries: 67%
- Chronic pain: 63%
- Anxiety: 60%
- Depression: 56%
- Hearing loss: 54%
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 27%
- Pulmonary issues: 20%
- Scarring or burns: 16%
- Vision loss: 9%
- Paralysis: 2%
- Loss of limb: 1%
- Other: 23%

How often do your service-connected injuries affect your daily life?

- Always: 49%
- Most of the time: 28%
- About half the time: 10%
- Sometimes: 12%
- Never: 1%
On average, how many hours of sleep do you get per night?

- 21% 0 to 4 hours
- 55% 5 to 6 hours
- 24% 7 to 8 hours
- 1% 9 or more hours

47% have ever been diagnosed with a sleep condition

How often do you have trouble sleeping at night (i.e. falling or staying asleep, rising too early?)

- 28% Always
- 30% Most of the time
- 16% About half the time
- 12% Sometimes
- 22% Never

How many times a week do you exercise?

- 10% I do not exercise
- 14% Less than weekly
- 9% 1 time per week
- 38% 2 to 3 times per week
- 22% 4 to 5 times per week
- 7% 6 or more times per week

Are you currently, or have you in the past, taken any of the following for a service-related injury?

- 75% currently and 75% ever prescribed Antidepressant
- 51% currently and 59% ever prescribed Anti-anxiety medication
- 40% currently and 58% ever prescribed Sleeping pills
- 13% currently and 46% ever prescribed Opioid-based pain medication

Examples
- Prozac, Celexa, Zoloft Paxil, Lexapro, Effexor, Cymbalta
- Xanax, Klonopin, Ativan, Valium, Buspirone
- Ambien, Lunesta, Rezerem, Sonata, Halcion, Restoril
- Oxycodone, Naloxone, Codeine, Morphine, Fentanyl

24% have someone assisting with some aspect of their daily personal needs

- 3% All
- 22% Most
- 41% Some
- 34% A few

How much of your daily needs do you need assistance with?

- 81% Spouse
- 13% Family
- 10% Friend
- 2% Grandparents
- 3% Extended Family
- 7% Paid caregiver
- 0% Other

Is this person a:

- 6%
- 13%
- 10%
- 2%
- 3%
- 7%
Are you using or have you used any of the following supplemental or alternative therapies as part of your care regimen? (Select all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Therapy</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural products (e.g., supplements)</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiropractic care</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature/outdoor adventure therapies</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acupuncture</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music or art therapy</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special diets</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal-assisted therapy</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service animal</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65% use alternative therapies to treat an injury received as a result of their service.
Cannabis

Have you ever used cannabis or other cannabinoid products for recreational use?

- Yes: 44%
- No: 56%

Have you ever used cannabis or other cannabinoid products for medicinal use?

- Yes: 30%
- No: 70%

How comfortable do you feel discussing medical cannabis as a treatment option with your primary care doctor?

- Very comfortable: 45%
- Comfortable: 21%
- Somewhat comfortable: 13%
- A little comfortable: 8%
- Not at all comfortable: 13%

16% have discussed medical cannabis with their current primary care doctor.

Would you be interested in using cannabis or cannabinoid products as a treatment option if it were available to you?

- Very interested: 40%
- Interested: 13%
- Somewhat interested: 18%
- Not interested: 30%

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- The VA should allow for research into cannabis as a treatment option: 72% strongly agree, 14% somewhat agree, 9% neither, 1% somewhat disagree, 3% strongly disagree
- Cannabis should be researched for medicinal use: 73% strongly agree, 15% somewhat agree, 9% neither, 1% somewhat disagree, 2% strongly disagree
- Cannabis should be legal for medicinal purposes: 68% strongly agree, 16% somewhat agree, 11% neither, 2% somewhat disagree, 3% strongly disagree
- Cannabis should be legal for recreational purposes: 44% strongly agree, 18% somewhat agree, 18% neither, 6% somewhat disagree, 13% strongly disagree
Alcohol and Tobacco

During the last 12 months, how many alcoholic drinks did you have on a typical day when you drank alcohol?

- 1 drink: 29%
- 2 drinks: 32%
- 3 drinks: 17%
- 4-5 drinks: 12%
- 6-8 drinks: 6%
- 9-11 drinks: 2%
- 12 or more drinks: 2%

An alcoholic drink is defined as:
- a 12 ounce beer
- a 5 ounce glass of wine
- or 1 shot of liquor

During the last 12 months, how often did you usually have any kind of drink containing alcohol?

- Every day: 8%
- 3 to 6 days a week: 17%
- 1 to 2 days a week: 18%
- 2 to 3 days a month: 14%
- Once a month: 8%
- Less than 10 days in the past year: 10%
- 1 or 2 days in the past year: 6%
- Not in the past year, but I drank in the past: 15%
- I never drank any alcohol in my life: 3%

During the last 12 months, how often did you have 5 or more (males) or 4 or more (females) drinks containing any kind of alcohol within a two-hour period?

- Never in the last 12 months: 45%
- Less than 10 days this year: 23%
- One day a month: 8%
- 2 to 3 days a month: 9%
- 1 or 2 days a week: 8%
- 3 to 6 days a week: 5%
- Every day: 2%
HEALTH AND WELLBEING – ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Have you ever used tobacco products?

- Yes: 58%
- No: 42%

How often do you currently use tobacco products?

- No longer use tobacco products: 61%
- Less than once a week: 7%
- Once a week: 1%
- 2-3 times a week: 3%
- 4-6 times a week: 1%
- Daily: 27%

What form of tobacco products have you used? (Select all that apply)

- Cigarettes: 71%
- Cigars: 42%
- Dip or snuff: 29%
- Chewing tobacco: 23%
- Pipe tobacco: 14%
- Vapes: 14%
- E-cigarettes: 8%
- Other: 2%

Have you ever taken part in a tobacco cessation program?

- Yes, from the VA: 7%
- Yes, from the DOD: 8%
- Yes, other: 5%
- No: 81%
Burn Pits and Toxic Exposure

During your service, were you exposed to burn pits and/or airborne toxic materials?

- **82%** Yes
- **18%** No

Percent exposed in each branch:
- Army: 86%
- Navy: 68%
- Marine Corps: 87%
- Air Force: 77%
- Coast Guard: 62%

Among those exposed to burn pits or airborne toxic materials:
- **53%** have had their exposure documented with DOD in a Periodic Health Assessment or other report.
- **49%** believe they have symptoms associated with burn pit or toxic exposure.
- Another **41%** are unsure.
- **76%** are aware of the VA’s Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits Registry.
- **59%** are registered.

Did you have any issues when registering with the VA’s Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry?

- None: 69%
- Few: 16%
- Some: 11%
- Many: 4%

To learn more about the VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, visit [https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp](https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp)

Have you completed the optional in-person medical evaluation that is offered to veterans on the Registry?

- Unsure: 15%
- No: 71%
- Yes: 14%

Does your VA medical provider discuss your exposures and any symptoms you may be experiencing?

- Unsure: 11%
- No: 78%
- Yes: 11%
Mental Health

Do you have a service-connected mental health injury?

- Yes: 61%
- No: 39%

76% of those with a service-connected mental health injury are seeking care for it

Top 3 reasons you are not seeking care for a mental health injury:

- 29% Have not found a mental health professional that understands my needs
- 26% Started treatment but decided to stop
- 19% Rather talk to friends or family

Where are you seeking care? (select all that apply)

- VA mental health professional: 73%
- Civilian (non-VA) mental health professional: 28%
- Vet Center counselor: 21%
- Peer support group: 18%
- Religious/spiritual leaders: 15%
- Veterans Crisis Line: 9%
- Civilian DOD counselor: 3%
- Uniformed DOD counselor: 1%
- Other: 11%

48% have had someone close to them suggest they seek mental health care

77% of these veterans sought help as a result of this suggestion by someone close to them

What are the most important reasons that you believe contribute to the military/veteran community not getting the mental healthcare they need? (Select all that apply)

- The stigma of seeking help is too great: 75%
- They have access to care but not quality care: 59%
- They have access but are not seeking care: 52%
- The cost of care is not properly funded: 40%
- They do not have access to care: 36%
- The cost of care is too great: 23%
- Other: 15%
Suicide

Do you personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has attempted suicide?

68% Yes
32% No

Do you personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has died by suicide?

64% Yes
36% No

Do you believe as a nation we are making progress in combating military/veteran suicide?

17% Yes
23% Unsure
61% No

In general, do you believe that the military / veteran community are getting the care they need for mental health injuries?

14% Yes
20% Unsure
67% No
IAVA members who are enrolled in VA healthcare continue to tell us they want less paperwork, more accountability and easier access to care. However, VA healthcare has come a long way and IAVA members report that their healthcare experiences are improving. The 84% of IAVA members enrolled in VA healthcare sound off on their experiences while using the VA.

While many think of healthcare when it comes to VA, many veterans and their families rely on VA for earned benefits, such as pension and disability compensation. The process to access these earned benefits can be daunting and leaves many veterans waiting for months or longer for a decision. Progress has been made, but long wait times and lagging technology continue to plague veterans waiting on their earned benefits.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- 86% of IAVA members report a service-connected physical injury or illness, and 61% report a service-connected mental health injury.
- About two-thirds of IAVA members have used alternative therapies to treat service-connected injuries; 7 in 10 veterans have at least some interest in cannabis or cannabinoid products as a treatment option if it were available.
- 82% of IAVA members report that during their service they were exposed to burn pits and/or airborne toxic materials. Around half have had their exposure documented in a Periodic Health Assessment or other report (53%), and 59% are registered with the VA’s Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits Registry.
- More than two-thirds of IAVA members personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has attempted suicide, and 64% know a post-9/11 veteran who has died by suicide.
VA HEALTHCARE – RATING VA HEALTHCARE

Rating VA Healthcare

Are you enrolled in VA healthcare?

84% Yes 16% No

67% are receiving VA benefits other than healthcare

What do you currently use for healthcare coverage?

- VA healthcare exclusively: 30%
- Private insurance exclusively: 21%
- TRICARE and VA healthcare: 18%
- VA supplemented by private insurance: 15%
- TRICARE exclusively: 8%
- VA supplemented by Medicaid/Medicare: 5%
- Do not have health insurance: 2%
- DOD and VA healthcare: 1%
- DOD healthcare exclusively: 1%
- DOD supplemented by private insurance: 1%

Among the 16% not enrolled in VA healthcare, what are the top three reasons you are not enrolled?

- 36% I have other health coverage and don’t need VA care
- 29% I prefer my private sector provider
- 24% Other veterans need the benefits more

Please select the most important reforms needed to address improvements to VA healthcare (select up to three)

- Reduce paperwork and bureaucracy to access care: 55%
- Reform hiring and firing practices to improve accountability of bad actors and rewarding good actors: 46%
- Expansion of specialized care: 36%
- Updates to technology: 27%
- More post-9/11 vets working at VA: 26%
- Expand telemedicine programs and other programs supporting rural populations: 25%
- Continued oversight of the Community Care program: 22%
- Infrastructure updates for building improvements: 14%
- Improved services to address sexual trauma: 7%
- Improved services to address sexual health: 6%
- Other: 8%
Who is your primary source of healthcare?

- VA provider: 54%
- Non-VA provider: 45%

When was the last time you sought healthcare from the VA?

- Less than 1 month: 45%
- 1-3 months: 17%
- 3-6 months: 10%
- 6-12 months: 10%
- 1-2 years: 6%
- 2-5 years: 5%
- Longer than 5 years: 7%

Rate your overall experience with VA healthcare:

- Excellent: 21%
- Good: 39%
- Average: 25%
- Poor: 10%
- Terrible: 5%

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- VA clinicians provide timely, quality care to veterans:
  - Strongly agree: 23%
  - Somewhat agree: 42%
  - Neither: 16%
  - Somewhat disagree: 12%
  - Strongly disagree: 6%

- VA clinicians understand my medical needs:
  - Strongly agree: 21%
  - Somewhat agree: 37%
  - Neither: 15%
  - Somewhat disagree: 17%
  - Strongly disagree: 11%

Which statement best describes your experience scheduling appointments with the following providers:

- VA mental health provider:
  - Extremely easy: 24%
  - Somewhat easy: 30%
  - Neither: 17%
  - Somewhat difficult: 17%
  - Extremely difficult: 13%

- VA primary care provider:
  - Extremely easy: 24%
  - Somewhat easy: 34%
  - Neither: 15%
  - Somewhat difficult: 18%
  - Extremely difficult: 10%

- VA specialty care provider:
  - Extremely easy: 14%
  - Somewhat easy: 28%
  - Neither: 17%
  - Somewhat difficult: 22%
  - Extremely difficult: 20%

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following providers:

- VA mental health provider:
  - Extremely satisfied: 30%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 29%
  - Neither: 16%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 12%
  - Extremely dissatisfied: 13%

- VA primary care provider:
  - Extremely satisfied: 31%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 34%
  - Neither: 15%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 12%
  - Extremely dissatisfied: 9%

- VA specialty care provider:
  - Extremely satisfied: 24%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 32%
  - Neither: 18%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 14%
  - Extremely dissatisfied: 12%
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- VA Health and VA community providers can do more to provide access to the most innovative treatments and medicines for specific military health needs
  - Strongly agree: 38%
  - Somewhat agree: 35%
  - Neither: 19%
  - Somewhat disagree: 5%
  - Strongly disagree: 3%

- Supporting mental health and wellness is a priority for VA Health and VA community providers
  - Strongly agree: 54%
  - Somewhat agree: 33%
  - Neither: 20%
  - Somewhat disagree: 9%
  - Strongly disagree: 7%

- The U.S. Congress and the President should do more to support future pandemic preparedness, including innovation for vaccines and treatments
  - Strongly agree: 57%
  - Somewhat agree: 22%
  - Neither: 14%
  - Somewhat disagree: 1%
  - Strongly disagree: 0%

- Congress and the President should do more to support innovation for treatments that address the unmet medical needs of veterans
  - Strongly agree: 72%
  - Somewhat agree: 21%
  - Neither: 6%
  - Somewhat disagree: 1%
  - Strongly disagree: 0%

In your opinion, which of the following are reasons to use health care services other than those provided or paid for by VA? [select all that apply]

- Easier access to care: 54%
- More options for care: 44%
- Access to new, innovative treatments and medicines: 39%
- Personalized care based on my unique needs: 34%
- Access to providers I trust: 30%
- More choices in prescription medicines: 17%
- More focus on mental health and wellness: 16%
- Prescriptions are more affordable: 10%
- Don’t think I am eligible for the VA: 5%

Why did you choose your VA Provider as your primary source of care?

- The VA is my only source of healthcare: 26%
- VA healthcare is free: 38%
- Higher quality care: 4%
- VA provider understands my military service: 23%
- The VA is more convenient (hours/location): 6%
- Not satisfied with private provider: 2%

Why did you choose your Non-VA Provider as your primary source of care?

- Not eligible for VA healthcare: 7%
- I am not enrolled in VA healthcare: 11%
- Higher quality of care: 34%
- More comfortable with non-VA provider: 9%
- Provider understands my military service: 1%
- Not satisfied with VA provider: 7%
- Non-VA provider more convenient: 32%
Community Care Program

Have you used the VA Community Care Program?

- Yes: 31%
- No: 69%

Rate your experience with the Community Care Program.

- Excellent: 26%
- Good: 35%
- Average: 21%
- Poor: 12%
- Terrible: 6%

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- Community Care Health Providers understand my medical needs:
  - Strongly agree: 31%
  - Somewhat agree: 39%
  - Neither: 17%
  - Somewhat disagree: 8%
  - Strongly disagree: 6%

- I receive timely, quality care from Community Care Health Providers:
  - Strongly agree: 34%
  - Somewhat agree: 33%
  - Neither: 14%
  - Somewhat disagree: 10%
  - Strongly disagree: 9%

Which statement best describes your experience scheduling appointments with the following providers:

- Community Care Program mental health provider:
  - Extremely easy: 26%
  - Somewhat easy: 30%
  - Neither: 20%
  - Somewhat difficult: 12%
  - Extremely difficult: 13%

- Community Care Program primary care provider:
  - Extremely easy: 25%
  - Somewhat easy: 33%
  - Neither: 19%
  - Somewhat difficult: 14%
  - Extremely difficult: 9%

- Community Care Program specialty care provider:
  - Extremely easy: 24%
  - Somewhat easy: 32%
  - Neither: 15%
  - Somewhat difficult: 16%
  - Extremely difficult: 13%

Of those who have used the Community Care Program, do you support the expansion of privatizing care at VA?

- Definitely yes: 28%
- Probably yes: 22%
- Might or might not: 25%
- Probably not: 12%
- Definitely not: 13%

50%

How confident are you in the VA’s ability to successfully operate its Community Care Program?

- Extremely confident: 14%
- Somewhat confident: 37%
- Neither: 19%
- Somewhat unconfident: 18%
- Extremely unconfident: 12%

51%
VA Disability Benefits

Do you have a service-connected disability rating from VA?

- Yes: 80%
- No: 20%

How long did it take for the VA to notify you of a decision on your claim?

- 125 days or less: 29%
- 126-180 days: 24%
- 181-365 days: 21%
- Over 365 days: 22%
- My claim is still pending: 4%

Was your claim delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Yes: 5%
- No: 88%
- Unsure: 7%

How long did it take for the VA to notify you of a decision on your claim?

- My claim is still pending: 1%
- Over 365 days: 23%
- 181-365 days: 22%
- 126-180 days: 24%
- 125 days or less: 31%

30% of the claims delayed due to COVID-19 were still pending.

Of the 4% of all claims still pending:

How long has your claim been pending?

- 125 days or less: 28%
- 126-180 days: 12%
- 181-365 days: 12%
- Over 365 days: 48%

Were you satisfied with the outcome of your claim?

- Yes: 68%
- No: 32%
VA HEALTHCARE – VA DISABILITY BENEFITS

Have you ever appealed a VA disability compensation claim decision?

- Yes: 34%
- No: 66%

How long did it take to receive a final decision on your appeal?

- 125 days or less: 19%
- 126-180 days: 19%
- 181-365 days: 17%
- Over 365 days: 25%
- My claim is still pending: 19%

Of the 19% of appeals still pending, how long has your appeal been pending?

- 125 days or less: 28%
- 126-180 days: 7%
- 181-365 days: 14%
- Over 365 days: 51%

Please rate your satisfaction with the following VA benefits.

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

Home loans:
- Extremely satisfied: 55%
- Somewhat satisfied: 44%
- Neither: 31%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 29%
- Extremely dissatisfied: 12%

GI Bill/education benefits:
- Extremely satisfied: 27%
- Somewhat satisfied: 32%
- Neither: 38%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 31%
- Extremely dissatisfied: 11%

Disability compensation:
- Extremely satisfied: 12%
- Somewhat satisfied: 11%
- Neither: 9%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 12%
- Extremely dissatisfied: 7%

Pension:
- Extremely satisfied: 12%
- Somewhat satisfied: 11%
- Neither: 9%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 12%
- Extremely dissatisfied: 3%

Insurance:
- Extremely satisfied: 21%
- Somewhat satisfied: 24%
- Neither: 21%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 31%
- Extremely dissatisfied: 30%

Vocational rehabilitation/employment services:
- Extremely satisfied: 21%
- Somewhat satisfied: 21%
- Neither: 13%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 39%
- Extremely dissatisfied: 11%

VA caregiver benefits:
- Extremely satisfied: 15%
- Somewhat satisfied: 18%
- Neither: 17%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 11%
- Extremely dissatisfied: 3%

When you have questions about VA benefits, who do you ask? (Select all that apply)

- Veteran Service Organizations: 100%
- VA employees: 66%
- Friends: 48%
- Family: 35%
- Elected Government Officials: 9%
- Other: 5%
- 18%
VA Healthcare Sexual Misconduct

Do you feel safe when going to a VA facility?

- Male veterans: 90% Yes, 10% No
- Female veterans: 84% Yes, 16% No

Have you ever witnessed or personally heard about sexual misconduct someone else experienced while seeking care at the VA?

- 3% have
- 7% Unsure
- 90% No

3.5% Report having experienced sexual harassment while seeking care at VA

- 23% are men
- 77% are women

0.8% Report having experienced sexual assault while seeking care at VA

- 50% are men
- 50% are women

- 35% reported or sought help in response to this sexual harassment experience
- 9% believe that the sexual harassment was resolved appropriately

- 52% reported or sought help in response to this sexual assault experience
- 10% believe that the sexual assault was resolved appropriately
Methodology

The 2022 IAVA Member Survey was designed and conducted in collaboration with the D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University. Researchers at IVMF fielded the IRB-approved online survey from September 3, 2021 through October 28, 2021 via direct emails to registered IAVA members, including any new members registered during a concurrent social media member recruitment campaign. Participation was incentivized with the opportunity to register for one of five Southwest Airlines vouchers for a domestic flight.

The final valid sample includes 5,174 respondents; the survey completion rate was 74%.

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Samantha is the Vice President of Revenue Operations for IAVA. She joined the IAVA team in November 2015 as the Salesforce Director and quickly expanded her role to oversee all of IAVA’s technology needs. As VP, Revenue Operations, she drives strategic planning and execution of cultivation efforts, revenue systems, and related processes.

Prior to joining the nonprofit world in 2015, Samantha worked in the retail, aviation, and high-tech industries. She has extensive experience in leading and enacting transformational change.

Samantha graduated from Boston College with a B.A. in Philosophy and a minor in Mathematics. While she is a civilian, she has close ties to the post-9/11 veteran community, having two siblings who served in the Army.

When Samantha is not at work, she is usually hiking with her dog, Rudy, at the gym, or on the lake.

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Travis serves as IAVA’s Sr. Director of Government Affairs where he helps lead IAVA’s Washington DC Legislative and Policy efforts. He has delivered testimony on Capitol Hill, conducted interviews with various media outlets, and has met with senior leadership at VA, DoD, and Department of Education in order to advocate for the post-9/11 generation of veterans.

Prior to joining the IAVA team, Travis worked at a consulting firm in Portland, Maine assisting Fortune 500 clients, as well as political campaigns in both Maine and Delaware.

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Support IAVA
IAVA relies on the generosity of our corporate and foundation partnerships and the support of individual contributors to amass the resources necessary to fulfill our mission. This Member Survey is the most comprehensive non-governmental survey of post-9/11 veterans and is an important snapshot of the veteran community that no other organization has the ability to replicate. IAVA is the leading voice advocating on behalf of post-9/11 veterans because our community takes the time to share their point of view and they trust IAVA to execute on their behalf. Help us continue this vital work by donating to support IAVA’s mission today!