

Woman Veteran Opportunity Report

Understanding women veterans
as an overlooked talent pool

Powered by LinkedIn data and insights



Picture a veteran. What do you see?

For many of us, a woman might not come to mind. But did you know there are **2 million** women veterans in the U.S., representing a diverse and experienced talent pool?¹

16%

Women veterans remain at their first companies **16%** longer than women nonveterans.

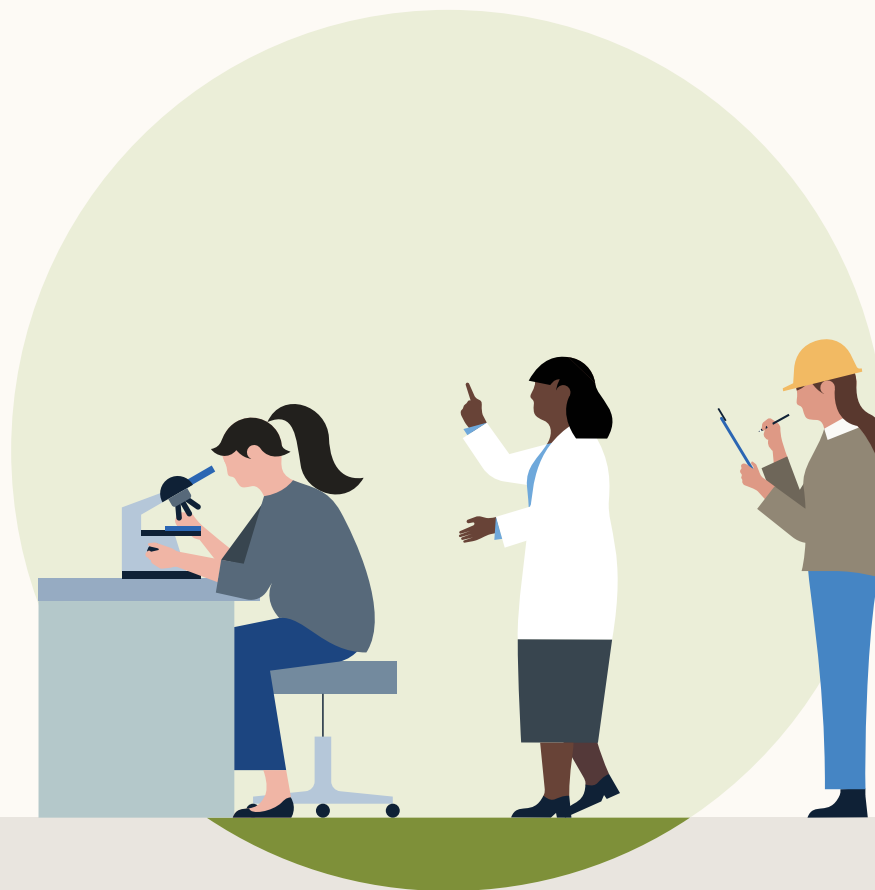
41%

41% have received a bachelor's degree or higher.² They study IT, engineering, and computer science at higher rates than their nonveteran woman counterparts.

34%

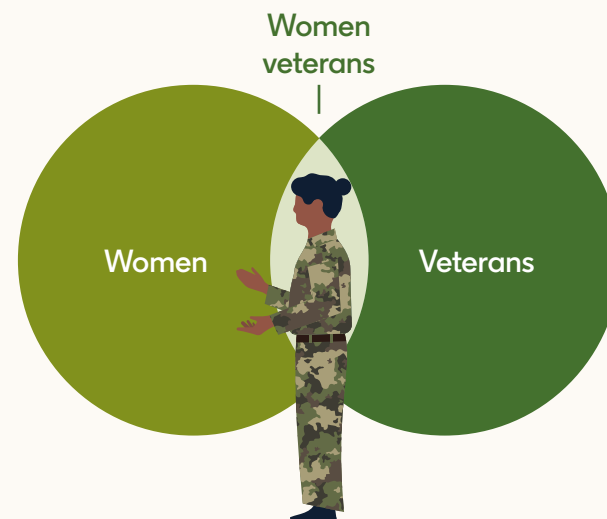
34% of women veterans are women of color, with **20%** of women service members identifying as Black.³

This resource was created to help give partners, employers, and allies a better understanding of who women veterans are, the value they bring to an organization, and the barriers they face when progressing in their careers. As you continue to diversify your workforce, use this information to tap into this experienced, highly skilled talent pool.



Underemployment and women veterans

Let's explore what the employment journey looks like for women transitioning into their post-military careers.



More than 30,000 women leave the military every year

Despite the fact that they often study in sought-after fields, underemployment for women veterans is **18% higher** than for women who aren't veterans. The gap is even greater when compared to the broader veteran community: women veterans experience **22%** higher underemployment than veterans overall.

Why is underemployment a bigger issue for women veterans?

[In-ter-sec-tion-al-ity]

Introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw about 30 years ago, intersectionality is the idea that the overlap of certain social categories (like race, gender, and class) compounds the systemic discrimination experienced by a person or a group.

Overlapping challenges

Veterans and women both face challenges when entering and navigating the workforce. Because women veterans are at the intersection of veteran and woman, they experience the challenges both identities face. And that's without taking into account other identities like sexual orientation, race, disability, and socioeconomic status.

“

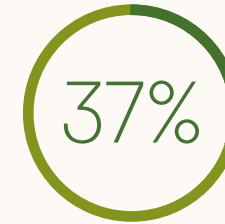
I wish people didn't seem so surprised to hear that I served for 20 years. I wish I never had to hear again, “You don't look like you were in the military.”

Jen Anthony

Retired Chief Master Sergeant,
U.S. Air Force

A post-military career hiring journey

We know underemployment among women veterans is higher than for women nonveterans and male veterans, but **their challenges don't stop there**. Gaps in the recruiting process and working in roles below their seniority level can be a contributing factor to women veterans' higher underemployment rates and financial hardships.



37% of women veterans experience loss of income as a key transition challenge, compared to **23%** of male veterans.⁴

Recruiting

- Women veterans received **11% fewer** recruiter InMails than women nonveterans and **22% fewer** recruiter InMails than veterans overall.⁵
- Additionally, it takes women veterans **three months longer**, on average, than their male counterparts to find employment.⁶

Applying

- Women veterans submitted **55% fewer** job applications per capita than women nonveterans.
- Women veterans submitted **11% fewer** job applications than the overall veteran cohort.

On the job

- Women veterans are **15% more likely** than the broader veteran community to join a company at the same level as or at a higher level than their military positions when making their first post-military career move.
- But compared to women graduating from college at the same time, women veterans are **33% more likely** to be in an hourly role when they transition from the military.

The leadership gap

We still have a long way to go before women are positioned as equal to men in politics, business, and organizations. Today, the leadership gap is wide for women, but it's even wider for women who are also veterans.

We know that women, in general, face challenges in accessing leadership roles and that the “broken rung” is still a major barrier for women moving to manager-level roles.⁷ Being a woman and a veteran further compounds the leadership gap.



“

The most challenging part of my post-service journey has been the ability to advocate and negotiate for things I deserve. I think the issue is always having to prove myself.

Siclali Loya

Program Manager at Deloitte
U.S. Army veteran

Women veterans vs. women nonveterans

25%

less likely to be
a director

7%

less likely to
be a partner

15%

less likely to be
a vice president¹²

Women veterans vs. veterans overall

31%

Women veterans are **31% less likely** to move into leadership roles within their first three years than veterans overall.⁸

The untapped potential of women veterans

Given the education and experience of women veterans, companies should be hiring them at higher rates. As you can see, they face many obstacles and challenges, but the reasons to consider this talent pool are vast.

13%

The ratio of women veterans in STEM roles is **13% greater** than the ratio of women nonveterans in STEM roles.⁹

40%

They study IT, engineering, and computer science at higher rates than women nonveterans and **40%** report that their military specialization is STEM related.¹⁰

41%

About **41%** have have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is a higher proportion than among veterans overall or women nonveterans.¹¹

16%

They also remain at their first companies **16% longer** than women nonveterans.



Recommendations

Here are some direct actions you can take to ensure that your company is not missing out on the skills, experience, and expertise an overlooked pool of professionals like women veterans can provide.

Plan

1. Explore your internal hiring data

If your company does not yet enable access to hiring data, create a cross-functional team from human resources, legal, and compliance to start building it. If you already have access to internal data, explore where women veterans are being hired by function, role, and level, and where you may be typecasting or undervaluing their skills. Explore attrition, promotion, and movement data in your woman veteran population to better understand and improve your employment practices so you're not unintentionally leaving women veterans behind.



Hire

2. Target women veterans for technical roles

We've seen the data. Women veterans are an overlooked pool of candidates who often have significant skills and experience, and who study and work in technical roles at very high rates (see page 6). When developing your workforce strategy, explore nonlinear career paths and nontraditional backgrounds as an opportunity to diversify your teams. Make sure you don't miss out on opportunities to hire women veterans into your workforce.

3. Include salary and benefits in job posts

Attract the best people for the job by sharing salary ranges in your job posts. Knowing how much a job pays can be more impactful for women job seekers.¹² Your organization can help close the gender pay gap by being transparent about salary ranges. Studies have shown that women veterans have lower salary expectations and attainment goals, and they request lower salaries than women nonveterans. Including information on salary and benefits can show qualified women veterans that your company is committed to transparency and fair pay in its recruiting practices.

Develop

4. Activate internal allies

So you've hired a woman veteran. Congrats! But don't stop there. External networking helps women veterans get the job, but it's equally important to network internally with other veterans, allies, and executives. Employee resource groups (ERGs) are a great way to increase a sense of belonging and build community.

5. Evaluate development programs

Are your internal workforce development initiatives inclusive of veterans? Creating opportunities and intentionally investing in women veterans can benefit your company in the long run. Given the gap in leadership roles among women veterans, a commitment to giving them access to internal programs and stretch assignments can foster diversity of thought and experience on your teams. It can also help your company discover overlooked talent and open the door for more women veterans at your organization.

Also, consider creating training programs that can set women veterans up for success. This will support them in understanding company culture and opportunities for career progression and growth.

Now picture a veteran. What do you see?

We hope the data in this report can help pave the way for workplaces that are more inclusive of people with intersectional identities and that benefit from the exceptional skills they offer. Let's also ensure our organizations are equipping women veterans with the tools and resources they need to succeed in their post-service careers.

Please visit [linkedin.com/military](https://www.linkedin.com/military) for more information.

Thanks for reading.



Appendix

Methodology

The same methodology from the [Veteran Opportunity Report](#) was used for the **Woman Veteran Opportunity Report**.

Gender is inferred from the member's first name. If a member's gender classification does not exceed a significant confidence threshold, the member is excluded from the analysis. The most common occupation of "owner" was excluded from analysis due to its ambiguous meaning.

Insights in this report are from LinkedIn data unless otherwise noted.

Citations and references

1. ["2021 Employment Situation of Women Veterans,"](#) U.S. Department of Labor, April 2021.
2. ["Women in the Military: From Service to Civilian Life,"](#) Institute for Veterans and Military Families, March 2018.
3. ["2021 Employment Situation of Women Veterans,"](#) U.S. Department of Labor, April 2021.
4. ["IVMF COO Maureen Casey Testifies Before U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Veterans Affairs on the Topic of Economic Wellbeing of Women Veterans,"](#) Institute for Veterans and Military Families, July 2019.
5. Women veterans received 11% less recruiter InMail volume per capita than women nonveterans starting their careers during the 12 months leading up to the start dates of their first corporate roles. Similarly, women veterans received less recruiter InMail volume per capita than all veteran career-starters (2.4 InMails versus 3.0 InMails during the 12 month period).
6. ["Women in the Military: Transition, Employment, and Higher Education After Service,"](#) Institute for Veterans and Military Families, March 2020.
7. ["Women in the Workplace 2020,"](#) McKinsey & Company, September 30, 2020.
8. We looked at veterans and nonveterans who started their corporate careers in individual contributor roles, and compared the proportion of each group that moved to a manager-level role or above within the three years following their corporate-career start dates.
9. ["Women in the Military: From Service to Civilian Life,"](#) Institute for Veterans and Military Families, March 2018.
10. ["Women in the Military: From Service to Civilian Life,"](#) Institute for Veterans and Military Families, March 2018.
11. ["Educational Attainment in the United States: 2019,"](#) United States Census Bureau, March 2020.
12. ["Gender Insights Report,"](#) LinkedIn, 2020.