

# FACT SHEET

**“Let the generations know that women in uniform also guaranteed their freedom. That our resolve was just as great as the brave men who stood among us....That the tears fell just as hard for those we left behind us.”**

*\*These words are carved into the ceiling of the Women In Military Service for America Memorial in Washington D.C.*

## WOMEN IN SERVICE

Women have served in the armed forces in some capacity since the American Revolution. Women have been awarded the silver and bronze stars, wounded or killed in combat, and taken as Prisoners of War.

- » In 1948, Congress made women a permanent part of the military services.<sup>1</sup>
- » In 1988, the Department of Defense adopted a “risk rule” that excluded women from noncombat units or missions if the risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture were equal to or greater than the risks in the combat units they supported.<sup>2</sup>
- » Women are authorized to serve in 99% of Air Force, 66% of Army, 68% of Marine Corps, and 88% of Navy occupations.<sup>3</sup>
- » Women currently serve in only 19% of Air Force, 13% of Army, 7% of Marine Corps, and 16% of Navy occupations.<sup>4</sup>
- » In 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta lifted the ban on women in combat, allowing them to officially serve on the front lines for the first time in the history of the U.S. Armed Forces.
- » In 2013, the first four females in history graduated from the 59-day infantry evaluation course at the Marine Corps School of Infantry in Camp Geiger, but are still not currently allowed to join infantry units and sent to non-combat jobs as part of continued research.<sup>5</sup>
- » There is a higher rate of minority females in the military compared to their male counterparts and the female civilian population.<sup>6</sup>
- » In the U.S. Armed Forces, a slightly greater proportion of women than men are commissioned officers (17% vs. 15% respectively).<sup>7</sup>

## RAPID POPULATION GROWTH

The women veteran population is increasing rapidly throughout the nation, especially in California. Since 2007, the population of women veterans has increased 1.1%, making California the second largest population of women veterans in the nation, behind Texas.

### **In California, women comprise approximately:**

- » 184,257 or 11% of all veterans.<sup>8</sup>
- » 4,369 or 21% of all National Guard.<sup>9</sup>
- » 49% are ages 41-60.<sup>10</sup>

### **Nationwide, women comprise approximately:**

- » 10% of all veterans.<sup>11</sup>
- » 15% of all active duty military.<sup>12</sup>
- » 18% of all National Guard and Reserve.<sup>13</sup>
- » 6% are Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care users.<sup>14</sup>

### **By 2034 in California, women will comprise 15% of the veteran population<sup>15</sup>**

- » While the female veteran population rises, the male veteran population decreases by 4.6%.<sup>16</sup>

## **BENEFITS**

Women veterans experience additional barriers to receiving and utilizing standard veterans benefits.

### **In California:**

- » Many women do not self-identify as veterans and thus have a lower rate of federal/state benefit utilization and participation in veteran events/organizations.<sup>17</sup>
- » In 2012-2013, women veterans comprised only 5% of the total customer population served by County Veteran Service Offices.<sup>18</sup>

### **Nationwide:**

- » 2 out of 3 VA disability claims involving Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) related to Military Sexual Trauma (MST)<sup>19</sup> were rejected.<sup>20</sup>
- » 32% of PTSD claims related to MST were approved compared to 54% PTSD claims approved overall.<sup>21</sup>
- » Women are generally given lower VA claim ratings (10-30%) than men (70-100%).<sup>22</sup>

## **TRAUMA**

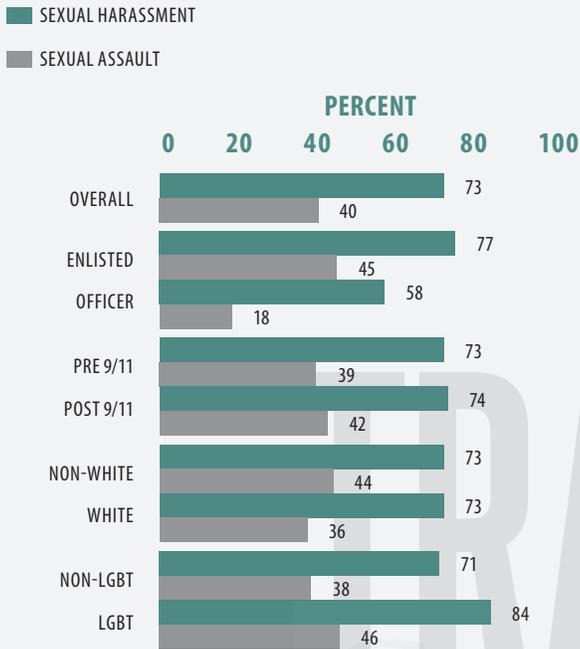
There are higher rates of physical/mental health problems (MST, alcohol/drug abuse and relationship difficulties) among female veterans that can be linked to an overall increase in unemployment and high rate of homelessness for this population.

### **In California:**

- » 73% experienced sexual harassment in the military.<sup>23</sup>
- » 40% experienced sexual assault in the military.<sup>24</sup>
- » 25% lower enlisted personnel reported MST, 23% non-commissioned officers reported MST, and 7% officers reported MST.<sup>25</sup>
- » 22% reported PTSD symptoms associated with MST.<sup>26</sup>

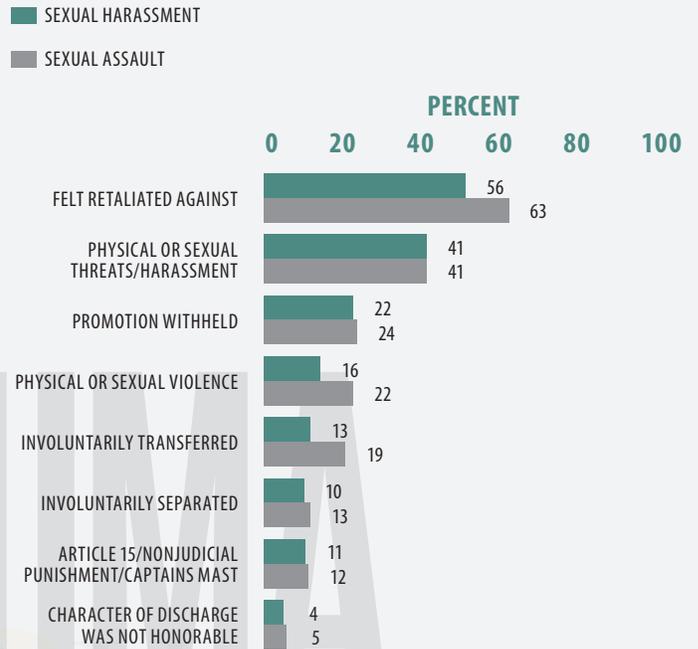
**FIGURE 1**

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT PREVALENCE VARY ACROSS GROUPS.



**FIGURE 2**

MANY RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED INCIDENTS EXPERIENCED NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES.



**Nationwide:**

- » MST has been found to be more traumatic and debilitating than sexual assaults and rapes in the civilian context.<sup>27</sup>
- » MST is more likely to lead to PTSD than any other military or civilian traumatic event, including combat exposure.<sup>28</sup>
- » Just under 39% of homeless women veterans were found to suffer from MST.<sup>29</sup>
- » Among OEF/OIF women veterans who had PTSD symptoms, 47% were found to suffer from high risk drinking.<sup>30</sup>
- » Women veterans were more likely to be divorced than non-veteran women, and about 23% of all female veterans are currently divorced compared with 13% of non-veteran women.<sup>31</sup>

**HEALTHCARE**

As more women use the Department of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services, the VHA services also need to reflect their unique needs and provide them appropriate and proper care.

**In California:**

- » 61% report private healthcare coverage through an employer or purchased directly.<sup>32</sup>
- » 30% report using Medicare, Medicaid, or any government assistant plan.<sup>33</sup>
- » 19% report using TRICARE or other military healthcare.<sup>34</sup>
- » 18% report using VA Healthcare System.<sup>35</sup>
- » 8% report having no health coverage.<sup>36</sup>
- » 70% rated their experience with VA Healthcare as “good” or “excellent”.<sup>37</sup>

**Nationwide:**

Service-connected Disabilities Estimates

- » 15% of men reported a service-connected disability.<sup>38</sup>
- » 12% of women reported a service-connected disability.<sup>39</sup>
- » Higher percentage of female veterans use VA health care only.<sup>40</sup>
- » Women are more likely than men to use non-VA care and to have a service-connected disability.<sup>41</sup>
- » Women veterans are substantially younger with 42% of women and 12% of men being less than 45 years old.<sup>42</sup>
- » Approximately 55% OEF/OIF/OND women veterans nationwide currently use the VA.<sup>43</sup>
- » Women are more likely to report depression and general anxiety symptoms and are twice as likely to be diagnosed with personality disorders.<sup>44</sup>
- » Effects of deployment among OEF/OIF women included higher rates of moderate to severe pain, higher distress after the first deployment and, when added with combat experiences, high rates of eating disorders and extreme weight loss.<sup>45</sup>
- » Deployment-related reproductive issues include problems during pregnancy and urinary tract infections.<sup>46</sup>

**EDUCATION**

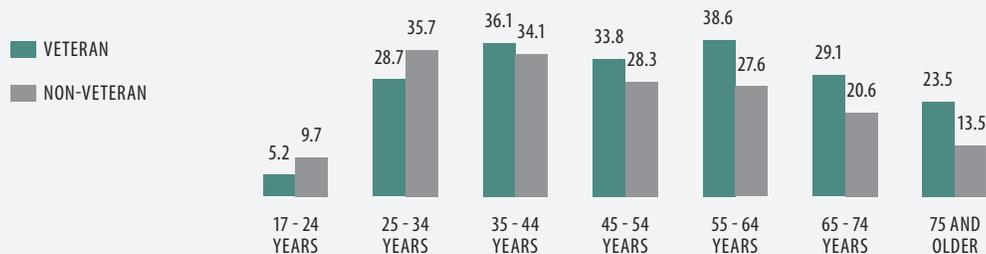
Women veterans are more likely to pursue an education and obtain a degree utilizing their educational benefits.

**In California:**

- » 33% had at least a four-year college degree.<sup>47</sup>
- » 54% have a high school diploma or GED.<sup>48</sup>
- » 13% have an Associate’s degree.<sup>49</sup>
- » 21% have a Bachelor’s degree.<sup>50</sup>
- » 12% have a Master’s degree or higher.<sup>51</sup>

**FIGURE 3**

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WITH A BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER BY AGE AND VETERAN STATUS.



ABOUT 5 PERCENT OF 17- TO 24-YEARS-OLD AND 29 PERCENT OF 25- TO 34-YEARS-OLD FEMALE VETERANS HAD COMPLETED A BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER, COMPARED WITH 10 PERCENT AND 36 PERCENT, RESPECTIVELY, OF NON-VETERAN WOMEN OF THE SAME AGES. A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE VETERANS AGES 35 AND OLDER HAD COMPLETED A BACHELOR’S OR ADVANCED DEGREE COMPARED WITH SIMILAR NON-VETERAN WOMEN.

**Nationwide:**

- » 50% of OEF/OIF/OND women veterans nationwide were likely to report using educational benefits compared to 37% of their male counterparts.<sup>52</sup>
- » Approximately 78% of female veterans completed some college, a Bachelor's degree, or an advanced degree, compared with approximately 61% of male veterans.<sup>53</sup>
- » 88% of women veterans were enrolled in college compared to 64% of male veterans.<sup>54</sup>

**EMPLOYMENT**

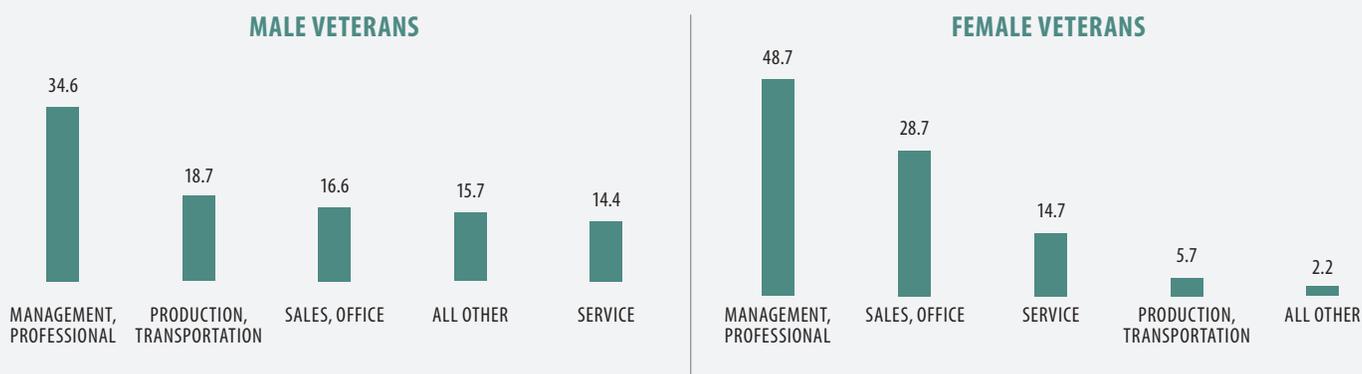
Although women veterans work in management and professional occupations at a higher rate than non-veteran women, they still do not earn as much as male veterans and continue to struggle to find jobs that pay what their military career did.<sup>55</sup>

**In California:**

- » 16% reported being unemployed and 28% reported they were unemployed but not looking for work.<sup>56</sup>
- » Approximately 7% of women who separated as officers were unemployed and 39% were unemployed but not looking for work.<sup>57</sup>
- » Women who served 10 years or more had a full-time employment rate of approximately 42%; women who served less than 2 years had a full-time employment rate of approximately 23%.<sup>58</sup>
- » Women make an average annual income of \$34,697 vs. men who make an average \$43,268.<sup>59</sup>

**Figure 4**

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYED VETERANS BY OCCUPATION.



NOTE: "ALL OTHER" INCLUDES FARMING, FISHING, AND FORESTRY; CONSTRUCTION, EXTRACTION, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR.

SOURCE: UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS. (2013). NATIONAL CENTER FOR VETERANS ANALYSIS AND STATISTICS. WOMEN VETERAN PROFILE.

EMPLOYMENT

### **Nationwide:**

- » 36% of women veterans age 18-24 nation-wide are unemployed; significantly more likely to be unemployed than male veterans and non-veteran women.<sup>60</sup>
- » Women veterans working in management and professional occupations are about 8% higher than non-veteran women.<sup>61</sup>
- » Approximately 38% of women veterans work for local, state, or federal government compared to 18% of non-veteran women.<sup>62</sup>
- » Women veterans on average earn almost \$10,000 less a year than male veterans.<sup>63</sup>

### **HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS**

According to a recent report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the VA do not collect detailed enough data on homeless women veterans in the general population and lack the knowledge needed from that to “plan service effectively, allocate grants to providers, and track progress toward its overall goal of ending veteran homelessness by 2015.”<sup>64</sup>

### **In California:**

- » 3% of women veterans surveyed reported being currently homeless, 19% reported experiencing homelessness at some point in their most recent separation, and 60% reported experiencing some form of housing instability.<sup>65</sup>
- » Of those who were currently homeless, 21% had children under 13 years old.<sup>66</sup>
- » Women aged 17-29 were more likely to be homeless or experience housing instability.<sup>67</sup>
- » In 2013, the VA awarded over 35 Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program (SSVF) grants throughout California which included housing for dependents.<sup>68</sup>
- » In 2013, the five major city Continuums of Care with the highest rates of unsheltered male/female veterans were all located in California.<sup>69</sup>
- » At 81%, San Jose had the largest percentage of male/female unsheltered veterans. Los Angeles followed, with 77% of male/female veterans living in unsheltered locations (Figure 5).<sup>70</sup>

### **Nationwide:**

- » 13% of women veterans utilize HUD-VASH; 43% of these women have children.<sup>71</sup>
- » VA identified 33% of homeless women veterans who had a minor child living with them, compared to 8% of male veterans.<sup>72</sup>
- » Women veterans are two to four times more likely to become homeless, compared to non-veteran women.<sup>73</sup>
- » The percentage of women among sheltered veterans increased 2.3 percentage points since 2009.<sup>74</sup>

**In order to keep informed of legislation, activities/events, and programs that effect women veterans, please ensure you complete and submit the Women Veterans Roster at [www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets/documents/rosterform.pdf](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets/documents/rosterform.pdf).**

**FIGURE 5**

CONTINUUM OF CARE WITH THE LOWEST/HIGHEST RATES OF HOMELESS VETERANS WHO WERE UNSHELTERED

CONTINUUM OF CARE - MAJOR CITIES		
CONTINUUM OF CARE	TOTAL HOMELESS VETERANS	% UNSHELTERED
<b>LOWEST RATES</b>		
RALEIGH / WAKE CO., NC	203	0.5
DETROIT, MI	518	2.1
OMAHA / COUNCIL BLUFFS, NE	91	2.2
LOUISVILLE / JEFFERSON CO., KY	171	2.3
BOSTON, MA	458	2.6

CONTINUUM OF CARE - SMALLER CITIES AND COUNTIES		
CONTINUUM OF CARE	TOTAL HOMELESS VETERANS	% UNSHELTERED
<b>LOWEST RATES</b>		
CHESTER CO., PA	259	0
PITTSFIELD / BERKSHIRE CO., MA	244	0
SOMERSET CO., NJ	99	0
WAUKEGAN / N. CHICAGO / LAKE CO., IL	82	0
BROCKTON / PLYMOUTH CITY & CO., MA	74	0

CONTINUUM OF CARE - MAJOR CITIES		
CONTINUUM OF CARE	TOTAL HOMELESS VETERANS	% UNSHELTERED
<b>HIGHEST RATES</b>		
SAN JOSE / SANTA CLARA CITY & CO., CA	718	80.6
LOS ANGELES CITY & CO., CA	6,291	77.0
FRESNO / MADERA CO., CA	338	76.0
OAKLAND / ALAMEDA CO., CA	492	71.7
SAN FRANCISCO, CA	716	58.9

CONTINUUM OF CARE - SMALLER CITIES AND COUNTIES		
CONTINUUM OF CARE	TOTAL HOMELESS VETERANS	% UNSHELTERED
<b>HIGHEST RATES</b>		
FORT PIERCE / ST. LUCIE, INDIAN RIVER, MARTIN CO., FL	94	100.0
SAN BUENAVENTURA / VENTURA CO., CA	91	93.4
SAN LUIS OBISPO CO., CA	260	90.8
PASCO CO., CA	368	90.5
MORRISTOWN / BLOUNT, SEVIER, CAMPBELL, COCKE CO., TN	37	89.2

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT. (2013). THE 2013 ANNUAL HOMELESS ASSESSMENT REPORT (AHAR) TO CONGRESS. RETRIEVED FROM [HTTPS://WWW.ONECPD.INFO/RESOURCES/DOCUMENTS/AHAR-2013-PART1.PDF](https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/AHAR-2013-PART1.PDF)

# FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

## STATE RESOURCES

» **The California Military Department**

[www.calguard.ca.gov](http://www.calguard.ca.gov)

» **California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA)**

[www.calcasa.org](http://www.calcasa.org)

» **California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**

[www.women.ca.gov](http://www.women.ca.gov)

» **California Research Bureau**

[www.library.ca.gov/crb/crbreports.html](http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/crbreports.html)

» **California Veteran Service Officers**

[www.cacvso.org](http://www.cacvso.org)

» **CalVet**

[www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov)

» **CalVet Veteran Resource Book**

[https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Documents/Veteran\\_%20Resource\\_%20Book\\_2014.pdf#search=resource%20book](https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Documents/Veteran_%20Resource_%20Book_2014.pdf#search=resource%20book)

» **Employment Development Department**

[www.edd.ca.gov/jobs\\_and\\_training/services\\_for\\_veterans.htm#womenveteransresources](http://www.edd.ca.gov/jobs_and_training/services_for_veterans.htm#womenveteransresources)

» **The California Department of Mental Health Services & Programs**

[www.dmh.ca.gov/services\\_and\\_programs](http://www.dmh.ca.gov/services_and_programs)

» **Women Veteran Roster**

<https://www.calvet.ca.gov/WomenVets/Pages/Women-Veterans-Roster.aspx>

## FEDERAL RESOURCES

» **DOD Safe Helpline**

[www.safehelpline.org](http://www.safehelpline.org)

» **Department of Labor, Women's Bureau**

[www.dol.gov/wb/programs/listeningsessions.htm](http://www.dol.gov/wb/programs/listeningsessions.htm)

» **DOD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**

[www.sapr.mil](http://www.sapr.mil)

» **Veterans Service Records**

[www.archives.gov/veterans](http://www.archives.gov/veterans)

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RESOURCES

### » **Women Veterans Healthcare**

[www.womenshealth.va.gov/womenshealth/healthcare.asp](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/womenshealth/healthcare.asp)

### » **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

[www.womenvetsptsd.va.gov](http://www.womenvetsptsd.va.gov)

### » **Women Veterans**

[www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet)

## REPORTS

### » **2011 Progress Report: On The Frontlines of VA Women's Health**

[www.womenshealth.va.gov/womenshealth/docs/wvhc\\_progressreport\\_082011.pdf](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/womenshealth/docs/wvhc_progressreport_082011.pdf)

### » **An Agenda for Veterans: The State's Turn to Serve**

[www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/217/report217.html](http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/217/report217.html)

### » **Business and Professional Women's Foundation: Women Veterans in Transition**

[www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/FINAL10.19LaunchReportWomenVeteransinTransition.pdf](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/documents/uploads/FINAL10.19LaunchReportWomenVeteransinTransition.pdf)

### » **California's Women Veterans 2009-2013 Surveys**

<https://www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets/pages/women-veterans-survey-2013.aspx>

### » **Department of Veterans Affairs Women Veterans Task Force Draft for public comment**

[http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/draft\\_2012\\_women-veterans\\_strategicplan.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/draft_2012_women-veterans_strategicplan.pdf)

### » **DOL Women's Bureau. Trauma Informed Care Guide**

<http://www.dol.gov/wb/trauma/WBTraumaGuide2011.pdf>

### » **Sexual Violence in the Military: A Guide for Civilian Advocates**

[www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications\\_nsvrc\\_guides\\_sexual-violence-in-the-military-a-guide-for-civilian-advocates.pdf](http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_guides_sexual-violence-in-the-military-a-guide-for-civilian-advocates.pdf)

### » **Sourcebook: Women Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration**

[www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub\\_ID=2455](http://www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=2455)

### » **VA Report: America's Women Veterans**

[http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/specialreports/final\\_womens\\_report\\_3\\_2\\_12\\_v\\_7.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/specialreports/final_womens_report_3_2_12_v_7.pdf)

### » **Women Veterans Screening Guide**

[www.swords-to-plowshares.org/wp-content/uploads/Women-Veteran-Screening-Guide.pdf](http://www.swords-to-plowshares.org/wp-content/uploads/Women-Veteran-Screening-Guide.pdf)

# BREAKDOWN OF VETERANS BY COUNTY

COUNTY	VETERANS	POPULATION	ESTIMATED VET POP	ESTIMATED HOMELESS POP	ESTIMATED HOMELESS VET
Alameda	62,628	1,521,157	4.12%	4,257	440
Alpine	114	1,176	9.71%		
Amador	4,259	37,911	11.23%	379	24
Butte	17,685	221,388	7.99%	897	102
Calaveras	5,488	45,693	12.01%		
Colusa	1,320	21,593	6.11%	303	32
Contra Costa	59,826	1,056,064	5.66%	2,386	82
Del Norte	2,987	28,594	10.45%	437	10
El Dorado	15,011	182,498	8.23%	217	10
Fresno	45,187	940,220	4.81%	4,492	606
Glenn	1,572	28,273	5.56%	See Colusa for combined count	
Humboldt	10,796	135,263	7.98%	846	141
Imperial	6,557	176,258	3.72%	239	6
Inyo	1,424	18,634	7.64%		
Kern	44,082	846,883	5.21%	1,352	172
Kings	10,138	153,365	6.61%	771	40
Lake	7,060	64,784	10.90%	See Colusa for combined count	
Lassen	3,593	34,577	10.39%		
Los Angeles	323,431	9,858,989	3.28%	46,726	7106
Madera	8,848	151,949	5.82%	See Fresno for combined count	
Marin	14,782	254,692	5.80%	725	51
Mariposa	2,237	18,261	12.25%		
Mendocino	7,010	88,197	7.95%	1,441	84
Merced	12,183	257,984	4.72%	502	52
Modoc	774	9,705	7.97%		
Mono	813	14,308	5.68%		
Monterey	21,517	419,038	5.13%	2,673	290
Napa	8,486	137,639	6.17%	248	14
Nevada	10,866	99,111	10.96%	742	59
Orange	132,529	3,029,859	4.37%	7,010	869

COUNTY	VETERANS	POPULATION	ESTIMATED VET POP	ESTIMATED HOMELESS POP	ESTIMATED HOMELESS VET
Placer	31,514	352,380	8.94%	See Nevada for combined count	
Plumas	2,258	20,025	11.28%		
Riverside	124,115	2,217,778	5.60%	6,096	912
Sacramento	93,424	1,428,355	6.54%	2,812	329
San Benito	2,964	55,619	5.33%	See Monterey for combined count	
San Bernardino	111,749	2,052,397	5.44%	2,532	224
San Diego	222,348	3,118,876	7.13%	10,013	1753
San Francisco	25,351	812,820	3.12%	5,895	774
San Joaquin	35,095	690,889	5.08%	1,569	80
San Luis Obispo	21,597	270,966	7.97%	2,129	225
San Mateo	29,929	724,702	4.13%	1,845	173
Santa Barbara	24,898	429,189	5.84%	1,546	173
Santa Clara	65,464	1,797,375	3.64%	7,053	667
Santa Cruz	13,238	264,430	5.01%	2,735	271
Shasta	17,358	177,924	9.76%	524	67
Sierra	331	3,248	10.19%		
Siskiyou	4,314	45,084	9.57%		
Solano	38,276	414,509	9.23%	622	28
Sonoma	31,560	487,125	6.48%	4,483	384
Stanislaus	25,683	517,685	4.96%	1,470	49
Sutter (Yuba)	6,477	95,800	0		
Tehama	6,059	63,950	9.47%	See Colusa for combined count	
Trinity	1,432	13,853	10.34%	See Colusa for combined count	
Tulare	17,291	446,837	3.87%	See Kings for combined count	
Tuolumne	6,741	55,256	12.20%	See Amador for combined count	
Ventura	49,694	828,383	6.00%	1,926	134
Yolo	8,094	201,759	4.01%	513	45
Yuba (Sutter)	4,885	72,479	0		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,865,342</b>	<b>37,510,766</b>	<b>4.97%</b>	<b>130,406</b>	<b>16,478</b>

No Homeless Counts found

# FOOTNOTES

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4. Ibid
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