



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

“The Relationship Between Employment and Veteran Status, Disability, and Gender from 2004 – 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)”

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Quick Takeaways:

- Among veterans, being female and having a disability are significant predictors of non-employment.
- Women veterans, both with and without disabilities, face unique challenges when seeking employment in the competitive market.

Study:

This study analyzed publicly available data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), an annual national telephone survey conducted by the Center for Disease Control that collects data on national health practices and risk behaviors. The number of survey participants varied between 300,000 to 350,000 annually from 2004 until 2011.

Researchers analyzed these data by gender, race, veteran, and disability status to determine the relationship between those characteristics and the likelihood of employment. The term “not employed” was used to condense multiple categories (e.g. unemployed, not working/not looking, and unable to work) into one category. This categorization provided researchers with insight into the overlap between disability, veteran status, gender, and likelihood of employment.

Findings:

The study found that disability, female gender, and veteran status were predictors of a higher likelihood of non-employment. Overall, individuals who self-identified as veterans were 1.08 - 1.58 times more likely to be unemployed than the civilian population.

Veterans with disabilities, including psychological disabilities such as PTSD, were 2.80 – 6.74 times as likely to be unemployed while women veterans were 1.0 – 2.0 times as likely to be unemployed. Women veterans with disabilities had the highest likelihood of non-employment – higher than both their civilian counterparts and male veterans. The largest gap in likelihood for employment occurred between women veterans with disabilities and women veterans without disabilities.

Conclusion:

Gender and disability status are important factors in predicting the likelihood of non-employment among veterans. Programs that serve veterans need to be aware of this connection as they design and implement strategies and service interventions. Targeting the specific needs of women veterans with disabilities and working to implement vocational rehabilitation or compensated work therapy can create a long-term impact on employment prospects and sustainability for women veterans with disabilities.