Illinois Veterans: Demographics, Challenges, & Strengths

**Current Total Veterans**  
Vet Pop as of 9/30/12; www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran Population.asp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>764,203</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wartime Vets</td>
<td>567,002</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Post 9/11</td>
<td>53,171</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gulf War</td>
<td>132,910</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vietnam Era</td>
<td>252,635</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Korean Conflict</td>
<td>83,812</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- World War II</td>
<td>56,570</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacetime</td>
<td>197,201</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67,290</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>696,913</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Illinois, Deployed**
- 22,000 National Guard deployed since 9/11
- 53,171 Post 9/11 Vets in the state.
- 10th largest Vet population in US

**Future Veterans**
- 35,000 new vets to Illinois between 2013-17
- Women vets = fastest growing demographic currently 67,000; 8.8% overall, 15% by 2035

**Challenges/Trends in the Veteran Community**
- Incomplete narrative of veterans as victims rather than societal assets
- Lack of personal engagement between veterans and the community
- Unnavigable “Sea of Goodwill” of government, non-profit and private efforts
- Changing demographics within the veteran community
- A hard-to-reach community, making outreach challenging
- Significant veteran unemployment challenges

**Readjustment Challenges**

*Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*
- High occurrence: 1/5 of post-9/11 veterans, and 1/3 of Vietnam Veterans
- Stigma with seeking mental health assistance
- Difficulty accessing care due to VA wait time and/or reluctance to use VA

**Homelessness**
- 13% of the homeless are veterans = 1,100 veterans on Illinois streets on any given night
- Women veterans (often with children) are fastest growing demographic in the homeless community

**Employment**
- In Sept. 2013, national unemployment rate decreased slightly to 7.2%, while Veteran unemployment increased slightly to 6.5%. **
- Illinois unemployment rate for Veterans aged 20 years and older in 2012 was 6.8%, down from 8.1% in 2011 *
- Young veterans (ages 18-24) struggle **
  - Male veterans: 28.8% unemployment**
  - Female veterans: 9.9% unemployment**

* (Report By The U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee Chairman’s Staff, Senator Bob Casey, Chairman, May 2012)  ** Employment Facts and Statistics, VA from BLS data, Sept. 2013
Underlying challenges

- Training and education gap in some cases (recent bills & EO13-02)
- Difficulty translating military training into relevant civilian credentials/licenses (EO 13-02)
- Difficulty matching veterans and employers (IHHC)
- A business community not yet fully mobilized

Women Veterans

- Women vets = fastest growing demographic 67,000; 8.8% overall, 15% by 2035
- 1 in 5 screen for MST (accessing care, homelessness, employment)
- FY12, there were 3,374 reports of sexual assault involving Service members
- Est. 26,000 women & men who experienced some form of USC 2012 WGRA

- What IDVA is doing to help women veteran-specific needs
  - Targeted outreach and engagement – Women Vet Fairs, Survey, Coordinator
  - Women Veteran Service Officers, state-wide to meet with women vets
  - Screenings of The Invisible War, to help de-stigmatize the issue
  - Advocacy in NFP community to help with non-VA alternatives
  - Leadership engagement and commitment
  - Helping them remember/relate positive military experiences

Strengths of the Veteran Community

Relevant Skills
- Leadership experience
- Teamwork, mission dedication
- A generation trained in “how to think” rather than “what to think” due to a counterinsurgency environment

Technical Training

Values
- Commitment to Service (a veteran is more likely to say “yes” when asked to volunteer)
- Desire to be part of something larger than self

VSO Facts
- FY Total to Date Veterans 44,946 and Dependents 11,279 for a total of 56,225
- over 34,000 claims sent to USDVA FY13
- Representing the IDVA in 80 counties across Illinois – the IDVA’s frontlines
- Stand Up and Be Counted – 5,952 signed up, as of 10/1/13