

# Illinois Veterans: Demographics, Challenges, & Strengths

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

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

## Illinois, Deployed

- 22,000 National Guard deployed since 9/11
- 53,171 Post 9/11 Vets in the state.
- 10<sup>th</sup> 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

<u>Same</u>	<u>Different</u>
- Transition is rough	- Smaller vet community
- Ethic of Service	- Demographic differences
- Connect with vets	- Support is overwhelming

## 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

