Minority Veterans: 2011

Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics
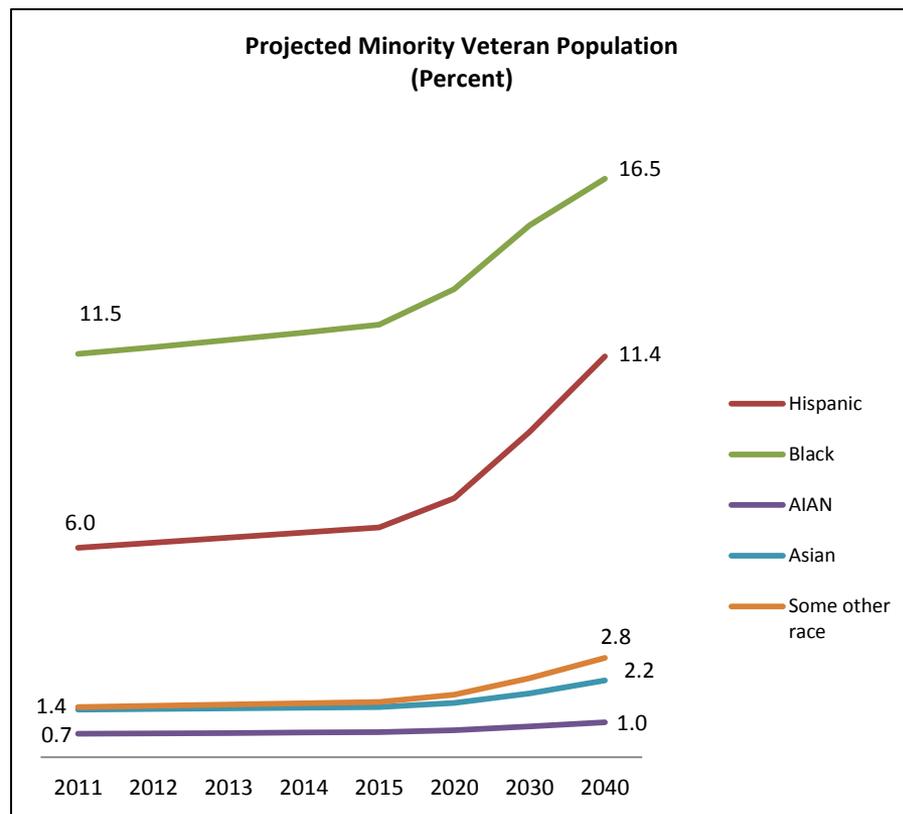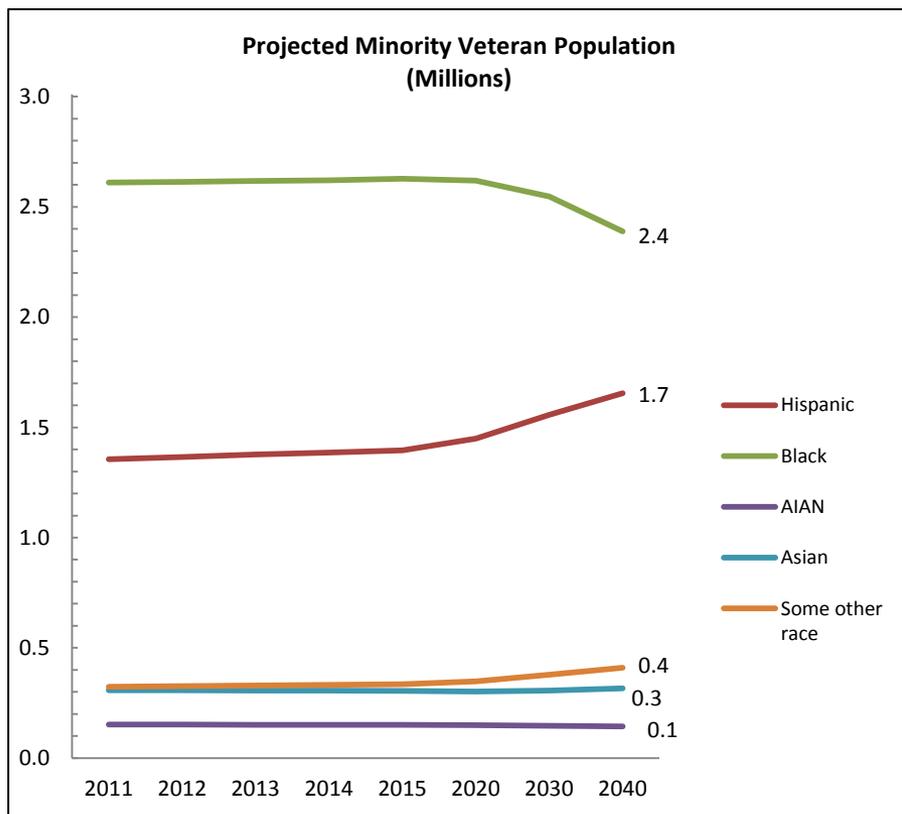
May 2013

Official Veteran Population

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the Veteran Population Model 2011 (VetPop2011) which provides the latest official Veteran population projection.

- VetPop2011 is an actuarial projection model developed by the Office of the Actuary for Veteran population projection from Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 to FY2040.

- Using the best available Veteran data by the end of FY2011, VetPop2011 projects future living Veteran counts by key demographic characteristics.

- The official Veteran population projection as of 9/30/2012 is 22,328,279 Veterans, of which 2,248,579 were women.

- For more information, please go to: http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp

The Veteran population is projected to decrease from 22.7 million in year 2011 to 14.5 million in year 2040. Over this same time period, the percentage of minority Veterans will increase from 20.9 to 34.0 percent. Among these, the percentage of Black Veterans is significantly higher than other minority groups and is projected to continue to be the largest portion of minorities Veterans. Beginning in 2020, the Black Veterans will gradually decrease in the number but the percentage of their total population will increase from 13.4 to 16.5 percent. The other minority races will be relatively static through 2020 followed by modest increases in numbers and percentages. The Hispanic Veteran population will steadily increase in number from 2011 to 2040 (1.4 to 1.7 million) and will almost double in percentage of the total Hispanic Veteran population between 2011 and 2040 (6.0 to 11.4 percent).

Minority Veteran Projected Population 2011-2040

Projected Minority Veteran Population (Millions)

Legend: Hispanic, Black, AIAN, Asian, Some other race

Values at 2040: 2.4, 1.7, 0.4, 0.3, 0.1

Projected Minority Veteran Population (Percent)

Legend: Hispanic, Black, AIAN, Asian, Some other race

Values: 11.5, 16.5, 11.4, 6.0, 1.4, 0.7, 2.8, 2.2, 1.0

Notes: (1) "Asian" includes "Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders".
(2) "Some Other Race" includes "two or more races" category.

Data Source and Methods

- Data for the demographic and socio-economic analyses come from the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample.
    - The ACS is an ongoing survey that provides annual data on the social and economic characteristics of the U.S. population.
    - The ACS uses a series of monthly samples to produce annually updated data for the same small areas (census tracts and block groups) formerly surveyed via the decennial census long-form sample.

- The universe for this analysis is the civilian population 17 years and older living in the United States and Puerto Rico.

- Race categories are shown for the non-Hispanic population (e.g., White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Asian non-Hispanic). Hispanics can be of any race.
    - "Asian" includes Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian.
    - "Some Other Race" includes individuals who did not report any of the other race categories and individuals who chose two or more race categories.
    - The term "AIAN" is used for those individuals who identified themselves as American Indian American Natives.

- All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level.

Issues to consider when analyzing minority groups

The sizes of the minority samples of Veterans are quite small, which results in large standard errors, thus making the determination of statistically significant differences difficult. However, minority subpopulations should not be analyzed as one monolithic group (i.e., all minorities versus the majority) to overcome these small sample sizes. Asians, American Indian and Alaska Natives, Blacks, and Hispanics, regardless of Veteran status, differ greatly by demographic, social, cultural, and economic factors.

The study of Hispanics in academic literature serves as a good example of why all minorities should not be lumped together for analysis. Hispanics are a diverse population. Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central Americans, and South Americans differ significantly in terms of citizenship status, education levels, English-speaking ability, and other characteristics. The differences between the largest and smallest subpopulation can sometimes be lost when they are all lumped together as one group, "Hispanics." Academic research typically analyze the main Hispanic subgroups separately when the data allow.

Citizenship status may explain much of the socioeconomic differences when comparing certain minority Veteran and non-Veteran populations. Citizenship is a requirement for military service, with some exceptions. Comparing a group made up of predominantly citizens (e.g., Hispanic Veterans) with a group that has a large proportion of noncitizens (e.g., Hispanic non-Veterans) may result in misleading conclusions if citizenship status were to be ignored.

Minority Veterans made up about <u>20 percent</u> of the total Veteran population in 2011. The majority of minority Veterans were Black (11 percent), with Hispanics as the next largest group (6 percent).

According to DoD data, <u>25 percent</u> of accessions to the Armed Forces in 2011 were minorities.

Veterans by Race and Hispanic Origin
(in percent)

80% White Veterans

AIAN	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Some other Race
0.6	1.3	10.8	6.0	1.4
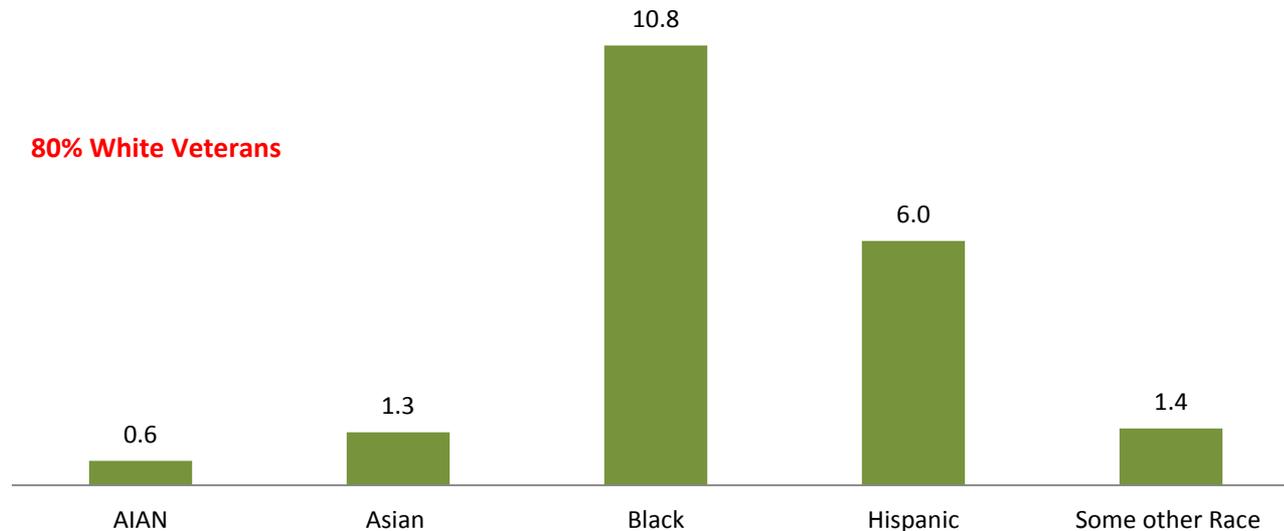
Asian and Some Other Race Veterans are not statistically different.

Note: All races categories are shown for the non-Hispanic population.   Hispanics can be of any race.

ACS 2011 showed that 20 percent of the women Veterans were black and about 8 percent were Hispanic. Also, women made up about 7 percent of the total Veteran population.

Women in the Military

As of September 2011, there were about 207,308 women in the Armed Forces, 14.5 percent of the total active force.

Source: Department of Defense, Active Duty Military Personnel by Service by Rank/Grade, September 2011. http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/milto p.htm

In FY 2011, <u>39.8 percent </u>of non-prior service active component enlisted female accessions were racial minorities.

18.5 percent were Hispanic.

Source: Department of Defense, "Population Representation in the Military Services," 2011

Female Veteran by Race and Ethnicity
(in percent)

67% White Female Veterans
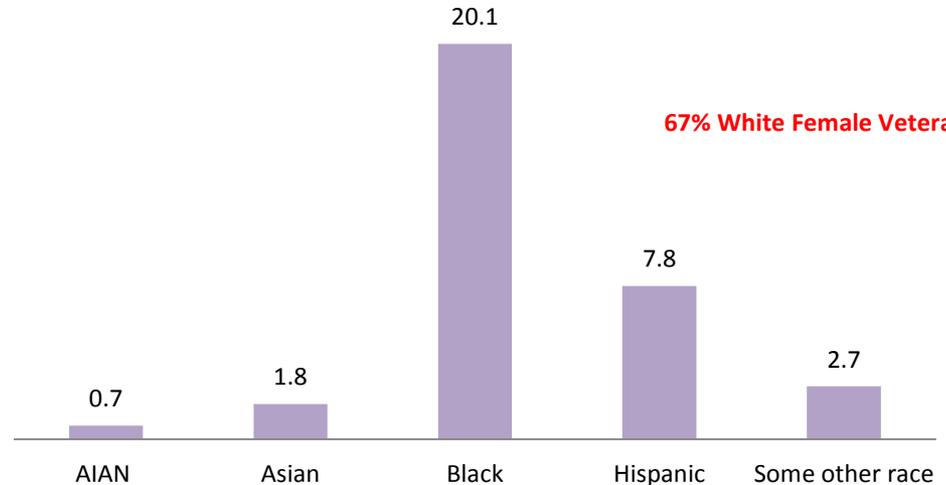
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 2011.

Age Distribution of Minority Veterans

Youngest Veterans: 17 to 34 Years Old
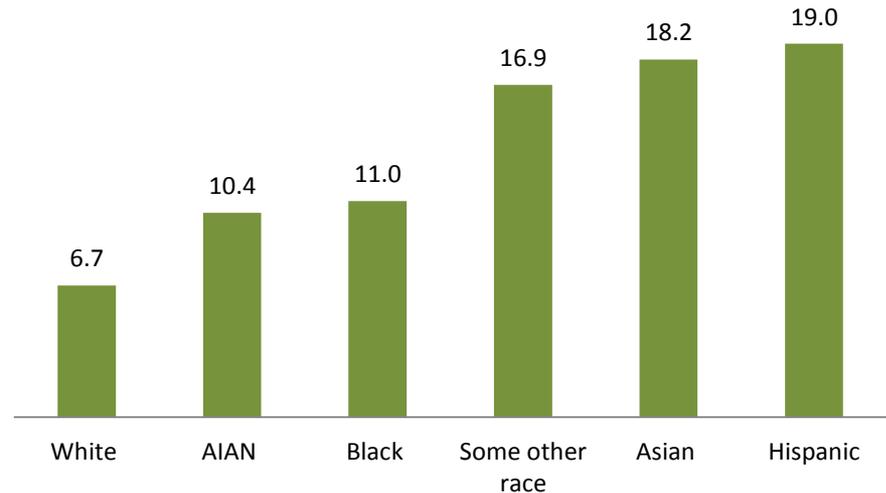**(in percent)**

Minority Veterans overall are younger than White non-Hispanic Veterans. Of all the White non-Hispanic Veterans in 2011, almost 7 percent were between the ages of 17 and 34. Over 18 percent of Asian and Hispanic Veterans were between ages of 17 and 34.

Of all the minority Veteran groups, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans and Asian are the oldest with a median age of 57 years.
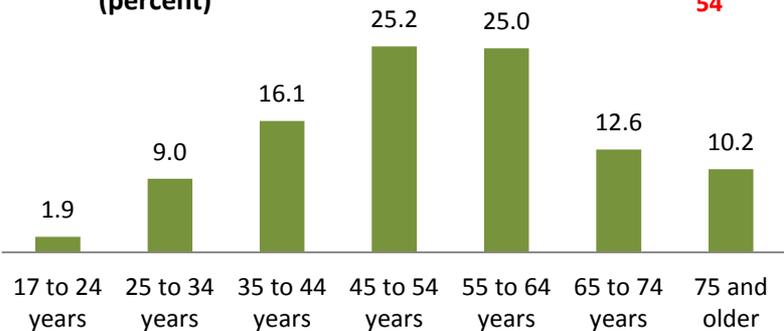
Some of the differences in the age distributions of minorities are related to life expectancy differences by race. Also, historical differences in the size of racial cohorts entering the military during specific periods could affect the age distributions (e.g., larger cohorts of Asians and American Indian or Alaska Native Veterans during World War II).

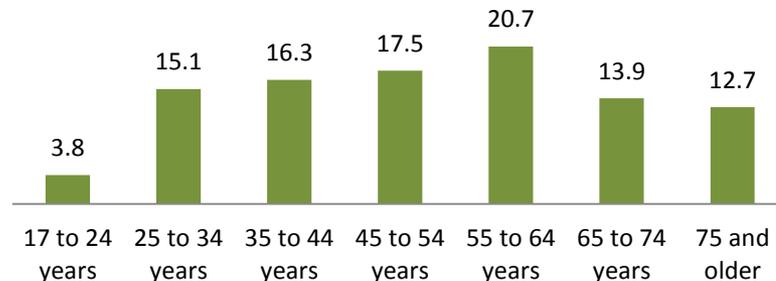| White	AIAN	Black	Some other race	Asian	Hispanic
6.7	10.4	11.0	16.9	18.2	19.0

AIAN and Black Veterans and Asian and Hispanic Veterans were not statistically different in the 17 to 34 years old group.
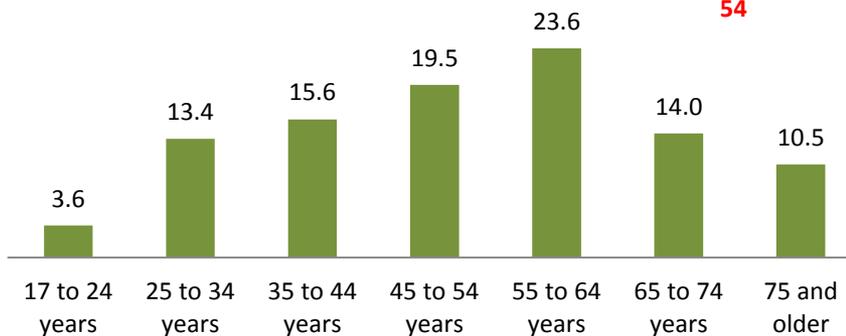
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 2011.
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Black Veterans (percent) — Median Age 54

Age	Percent
17 to 24 years	1.9
25 to 34 years	9.0
35 to 44 years	16.1
45 to 54 years	25.2
55 to 64 years	25.0
65 to 74 years	12.6
75 and older	10.2

Hispanic Veterans (percent) — Median Age 54

Age	Percent
17 to 24 years	3.8
25 to 34 years	15.1
35 to 44 years	16.3
45 to 54 years	17.5
55 to 64 years	20.7
65 to 74 years	13.9
75 and older	12.7

Median age of White non-Hispanic Veterans 64

Some other race Veterans — Median Age 54

Age	Percent
17 to 24 years	3.6
25 to 34 years	13.4
35 to 44 years	15.6
45 to 54 years	19.5
55 to 64 years	23.6
65 to 74 years	14.0
75 and older	10.5

Asian Veterans (percent) — Median Age 57

Age	Percent
17 to 24 years	4.0
25 to 34 years	14.2
35 to 44 years	15.9
45 to 54 years	13.8
55 to 64 years	19.1
65 to 74 years	16.0
75 and older	17.0

AIAN Veterans (percent) — Median Age 57

Age	Percent
17 to 24 years	3.0
25 to 34 years	7.4
35 to 44 years	13.0
45 to 54 years	21.5
55 to 64 years	27.9
65 to 74 years	17.7
75 and older	9.5
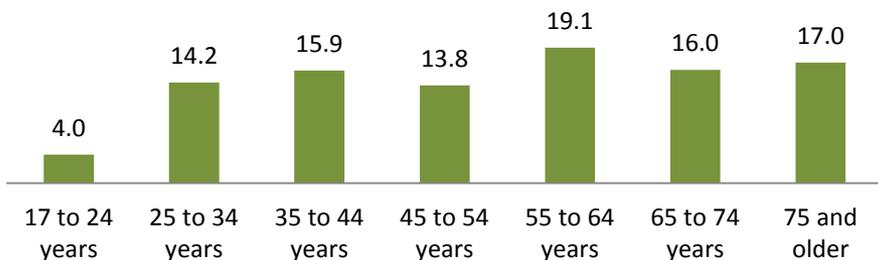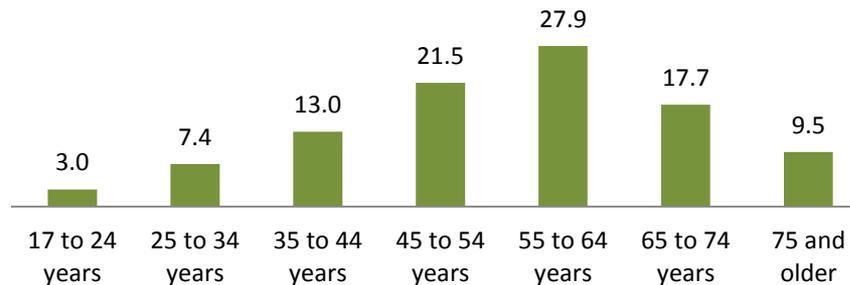
Asians are the oldest cohort of Veterans in general. The Asian and American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans in the 65 to 74 years old group and Asian Veterans for the 75 years old group.

65 to 74 years
(in percent)

Black	Asian	AIAN	Some other race	Hispanic
12.6	16.0	17.7	14.0	13.9

75 years and older
(in percent)

Black	Asian	AIAN	Some other race	Hispanic
10.2	17.0	9.5	10.5	12.7
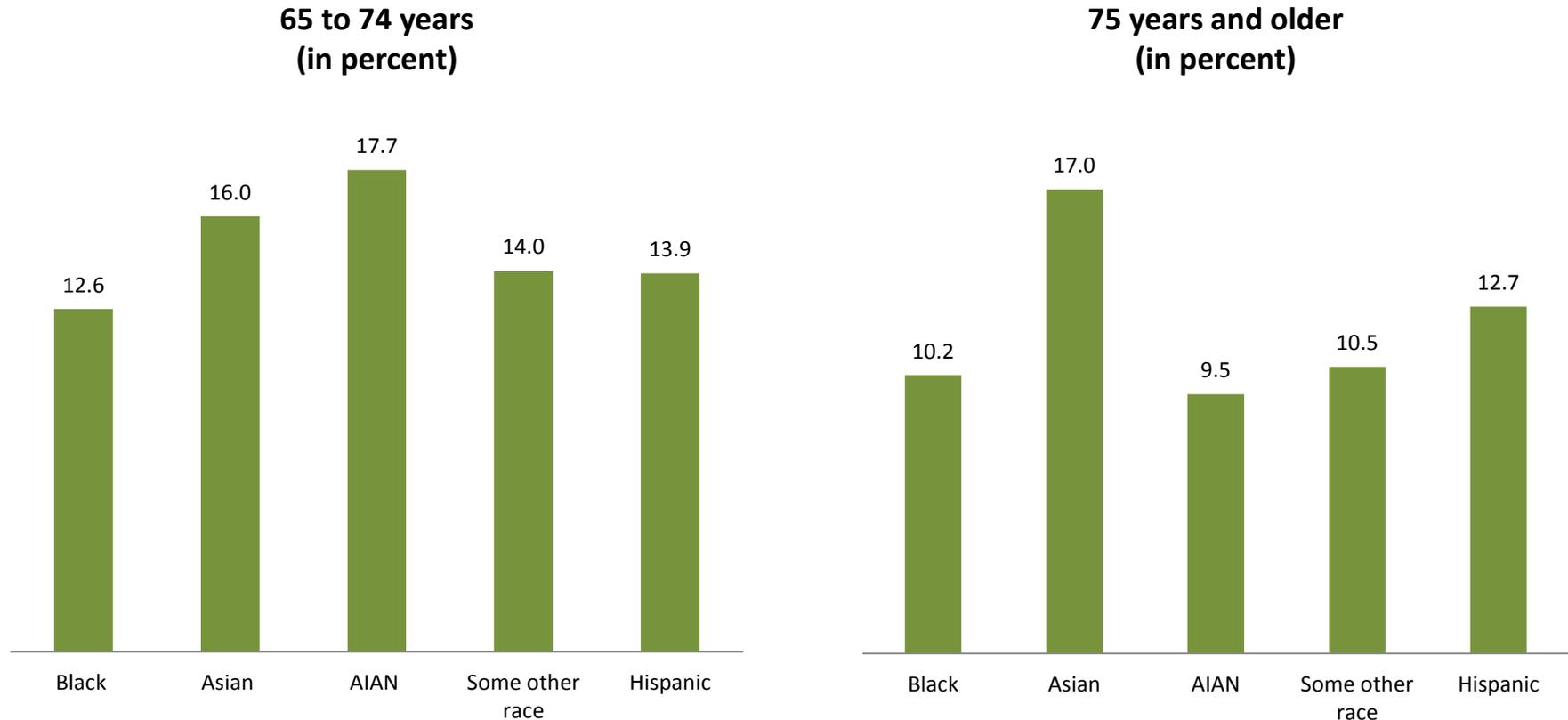
AIAN and Asian Veterans were not statistically different in the 65 to 74 year old group as well as the Hispanic and Some Other Race Veterans. AIAN, Black and Some Other Race Veterans were not statistically different in the 75 years and older group.

The Gulf War II and Gulf War I had the highest number of minority Veterans serving. Almost 1 in 3 of the Veterans were Black and one in five were Hispanics.

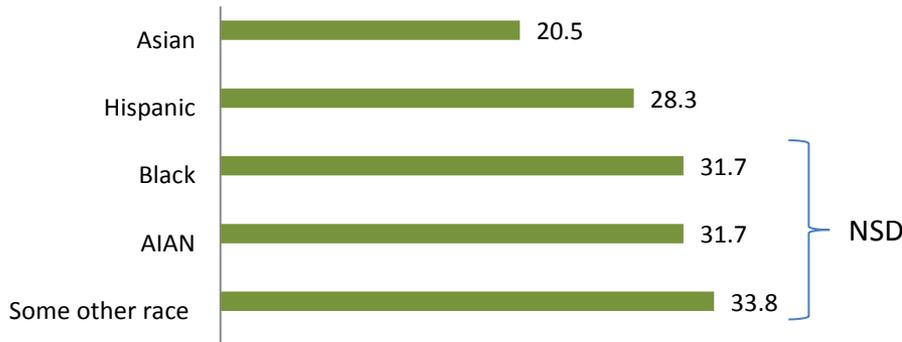## Veterans by Period of Service by Race and Ethnicity
(in percent)

	White	Black	AIAN	Asian	Some Other Race	Hispanic
Gulf War II Only	66.5	15.4	0.7	2.9	2.7	11.9
Gulf War I Only	69.7	16.9	0.7	1.9	2.0	8.8
Vietnam Era Only	83.7	8.9	0.7	1.0	1.2	4.6
Korean Conflict Only	88.9	5.1	0.4	0.9	0.8	4.0
World War II Only	91.9	4.1	0.2	0.9	0.5	2.5
Peacetime Only	78.9	12.5	0.7	1.1	1.2	5.7

Notes: Periods of military service are not mutually exclusive. Veterans could have served in multiple periods.
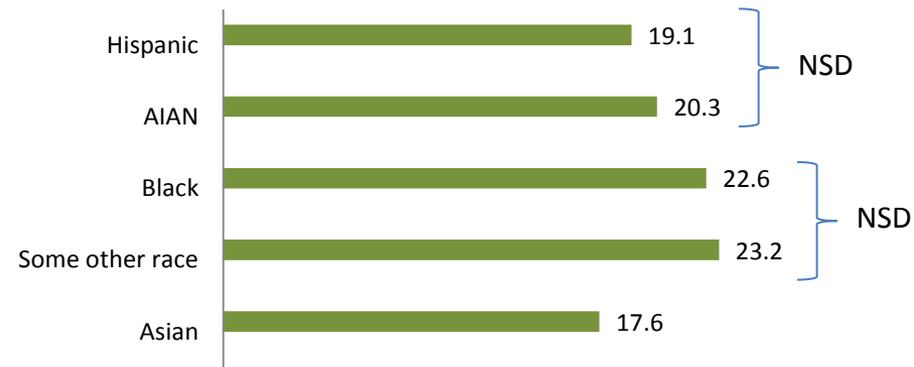
Asian and Some other Race Veterans were not statistically different in their percentages by period of service.

Higher percentages of AIAN, Black and Some Other Race Veterans used VA health care, compared with Asian Veterans. Asian Veterans reported the lowest percentage with a service-connected disability rating. AIAN Veterans had the highest in poverty rate at 15.4 percent while Asian Veterans had the lowest at 6.9 percent. AIAN Veterans had the highest uninsured rate of all minority Veterans at about 15 percent while Asian Veterans had the lowest at about 7 percent.
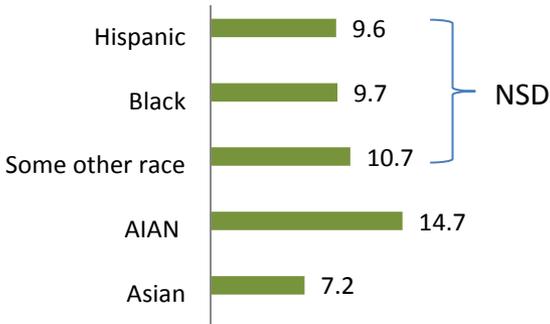

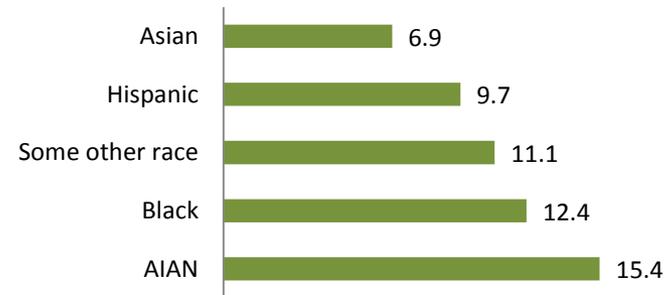**Used VA Health Care (in percent)**

Race	Percent
Asian	20.5
Hispanic	28.3
Black	31.7
AIAN	31.7
Some other race	33.8

(Black, AIAN, Some other race — NSD)

Service-Connected Disabled (in percent)

Race	Percent
Hispanic	19.1
AIAN	20.3
Black	22.6
Some other race	23.2
Asian	17.6

(Hispanic, AIAN — NSD; Black, Some other race — NSD)

Uninsured (in percent)

Race	Percent
Hispanic	9.6
Black	9.7
Some other race	10.7
AIAN	14.7
Asian	7.2

(Hispanic, Black, Some other race — NSD)

In Poverty (in percent)

Race	Percent
Asian	6.9
Hispanic	9.7
Some other race	11.1
Black	12.4
AIAN	15.4

Note: For each of the graphs shown above, the base/denominator is the total number of Veterans in that particular race or ethnic group.

NSD = Not Statistically Different

Issues to consider when comparing Veterans and non-Veterans

Veterans overall are predominantly men (around 93 percent) whereas just over half of all non-Veterans are women. This compositional difference is particularly important to remember when doing any economic comparisons. Men, in general, earn more, are more likely to be employed, less likely to be single parents, and less likely to live in poverty than women. Any economic differences between the total Veteran population and the total non-Veteran population may be exaggerated by the differences in the sex ratios of the two groups.
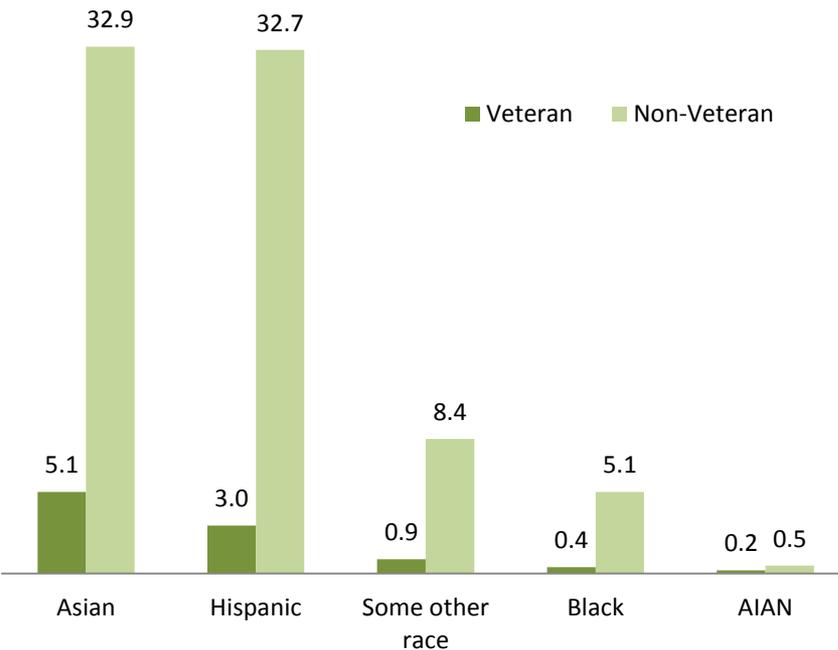
Veterans overall are significantly older than non-Veterans, with a median age around 62 compared with 43 for non-Veterans. Any characteristics correlated with age (e.g., employment, disability, income) will be affected by the differences in the age distributions of the two groups.

There are issues of selection bias in any comparison of Veterans and non-Veterans. Individuals in the All-Volunteer Force are not randomly selected into the Armed Forces. They choose to enlist and are then chosen by the military based on specific criteria, both mental and physical, that may set them apart from the population who chose not to enlist. Any effects ascribed to military service may actually be attributable to pre-service characteristics and not "Veteran" status at all.

Why citizenship status is an important consideration when comparing Veterans and non-Veteran minority groups

Not a U.S. Citizen by Veteran Status
(percent)

Legend: ■ Veteran ■ Non-Veteran

Race	Veteran	Non-Veteran
Asian	5.1	32.9
Hispanic	3.0	32.7
Some other race	0.9	8.4
Black	0.4	5.1
AIAN	0.2	0.5

Asian and Hispanic U.S. citizens non-Veterans were not statistically different.

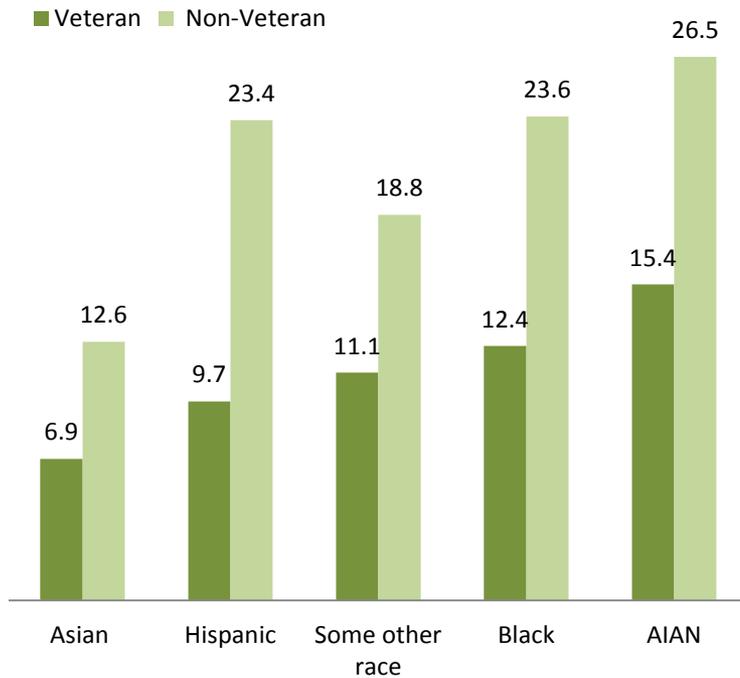## Socioeconomic Differences by Citizenship Status

Noncitizens overall had lower median incomes, higher rates of poverty, and higher uninsured rates than citizens in 2011. *(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011")*

About 89 percent of noncitizens speak a language other than English at home compared to 15 percent of citizens. Of those noncitizens who speak a language other than English at home, 48 percent speak English less than "very well." *(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, PUMS, 2011)*

About 40 percent of noncitizens had less than a high school diploma in 2011, compared with 14 percent of citizens. *(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, PUMS, 2011)*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 2011.
Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

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After removing noncitizens from the population base, Veterans were still less likely to live in poverty. As for non-Veterans, the percentages of Asian and Hispanic living in poverty is lower for U.S. citizens. This is an example of the difference citizenship status can make in a socio-economic analysis for certain races.

Percent in Poverty –Total Population
(percent)

Legend: ■ Veteran ■ Non-Veteran

Race	Veteran	Non-Veteran
Asian	6.9	12.6
Hispanic	9.7	23.4
Some other race	11.1	18.8
Black	12.4	23.6
AIAN	15.4	26.5

Percent in Poverty – U.S. Citizens Only
(percent)

Legend: ■ Veterans ■ Non-Veterans

Race	Veterans	Non-Veterans
Asian	6.3	6.3
Hispanic	9.6	20.5
Some other race	11.1	18.3
Black	12.4	23.6
AIAN	15.4	26.5

Hispanic and Black non-Veterans were not statistically different from each other as a percentage of the total population.
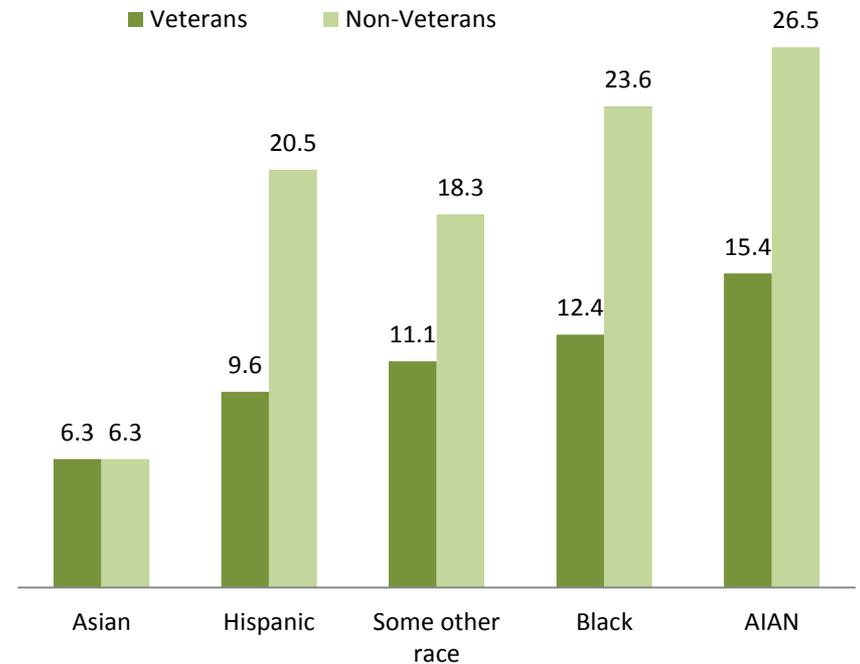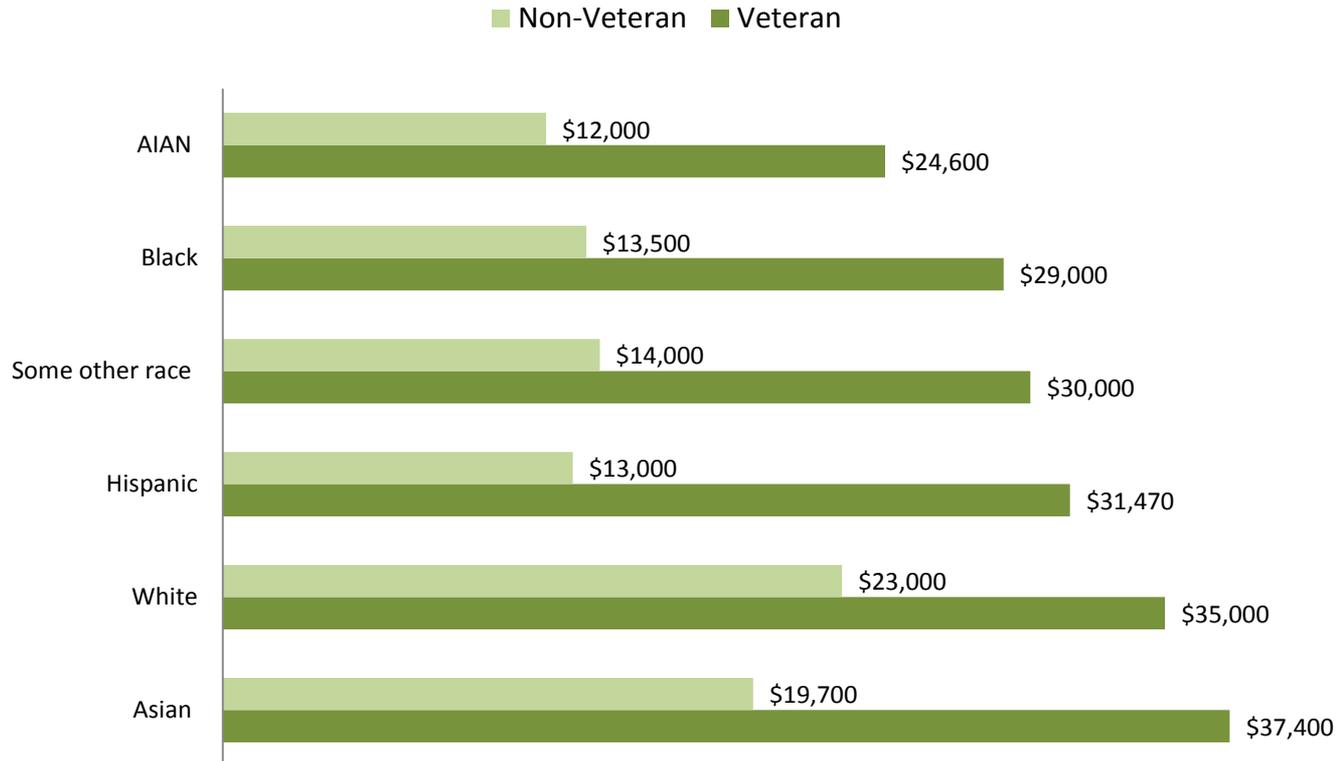
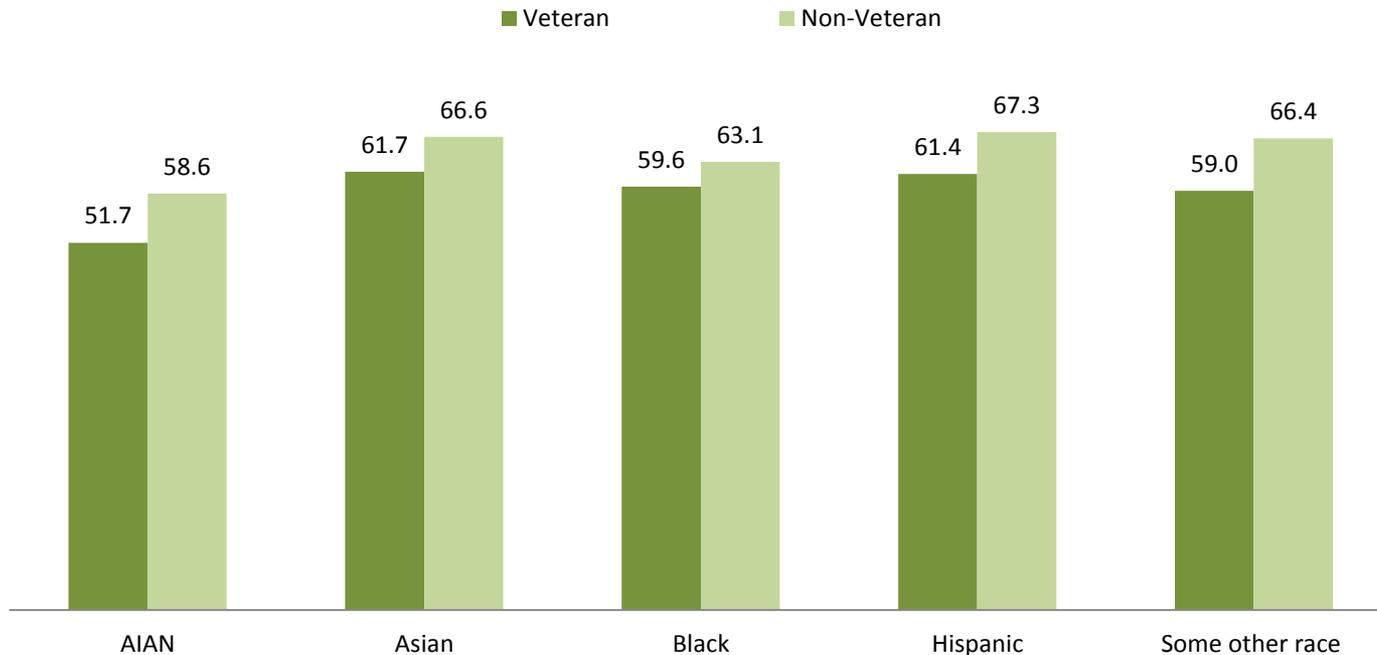Asian Veterans were not statistically different from Asian non-Veterans.

Median Personal Incomes of minority Veteran are higher than their Non-Veteran counterparts in 2011. Traditionally, Veterans have higher incomes than Non-Veterans. The reasons could be attributed to Veterans are more educated, possess higher employment rates and are older than the Non-Veterans.

Median Personal Income by Race and Hispanic Origin

■ Non-Veteran   ■ Veteran

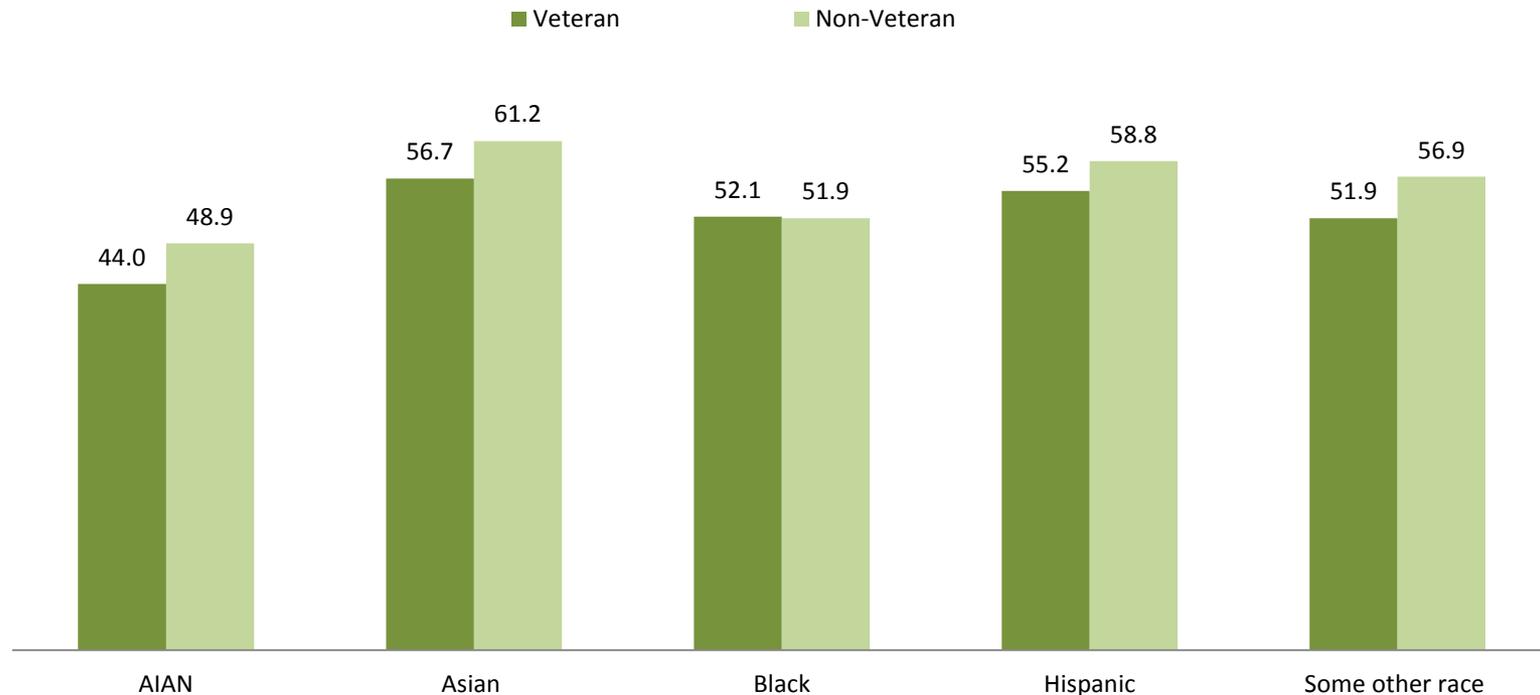| Race	Non-Veteran	Veteran
AIAN	$12,000	$24,600
Black	$13,500	$29,000
Some other race	$14,000	$30,000
Hispanic	$13,000	$31,470
White	$23,000	$35,000
Asian	$19,700	$37,400

The **labor force participation rate** shows the percentage of the total population who are *actively* participating in the labor force. This includes both employed and unemployed individuals. The remainder of the population (referred to as "not in labor force") could include retired people, full-time students, stay-at-home parents, caregivers, people with disabilities that preclude employment, or discouraged workers who are no longer looking for a job. Veterans of all race and Hispanic origin groups had lower labor force participation rates compared with non-Veterans. Much of this difference is likely due to the age of the Veterans.

Labor Force Participation Percent by Race and Hispanic Origin

■ Veteran   ■ Non-Veteran

Race	Veteran	Non-Veteran
AIAN	51.7	58.6
Asian	61.7	66.6
Black	59.6	63.1
Hispanic	61.4	67.3
Some other race	59.0	66.4

Asian Veterans had the highest percentage employed while American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Veterans had the lowest. As compared with their non-Veteran counterparts, there was no difference in the percent employed for Blacks.

Percent Employed by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Veteran Status

■ Veteran　　　■ Non-Veteran

	AIAN	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Some other race
Veteran	44.0	56.7	52.1	55.2	51.9
Non-Veteran	48.9	61.2	51.9	58.8	56.9

Minority Veterans Compared with Minority Non-Veterans

Blacks (non-Hispanic)

Black Veterans were older, had more education, a lower uninsured rate, and a lower poverty rate than Black non-Veterans.

Asians (non-Hispanic)

Asian Veterans were older, had less education, a lower employment rate, a lower uninsured rate, and a lower poverty rates than Asian non-Veterans.

American Indians and Alaska Natives (non-Hispanic)

American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans were older, had more education, a lower uninsured rate, and a lower poverty rate than American Indian and Alaska Native non-Veterans.

Some Other Race (non-Hispanic)

Some Other Race Veterans were older, had a lower employment rate, a lower uninsured rate, and a lower poverty rate than Some Other Race non-Veterans. No statistically different in terms of higher education.

Hispanics

Hispanic Veterans were older, had more education, a lower employment rate, a lower uninsured rate, and a lower poverty rate than Hispanic non-Veterans.

Minority Veterans Compared with Each Other

In terms of educational attainment…

Asian Veterans had the highest percentage with a Bachelor's degree or advanced degree.

In terms of employment…

Asian and Hispanic Veterans had the highest percentage employed in the past 12 months, respectively. American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans had the lowest percentage employed in the past 12 months.

In terms of poverty…

American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans had the highest poverty rate in 2011. Asian Veterans had the lowest poverty rate in 2011.

In terms of health care coverage…

American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans had the highest uninsured rate in 2011. Asian Veterans had the lowest uninsured rate in 2011. The percentage of health care coverage between Black and Hispanic Veterans was no statistically different. *Note: Indian Health Services (IHS)is not included as a health insurance source in ACS therefore AIAN Veterans, using IHS, were not considered insured if IHS is the only insurance use.*

In terms of VA utilization…

Asian Veterans had the lowest percentage using VA health care. The percentage of VA utilization between Black and American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans was not statistically different.

Asian Veterans had the lowest percentage with a service-connected disability rating. The percentage of service-connected disability between Black and Some Other Race Veterans and between Hispanic and American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans was not statistically different.

Summary

On average, most minority Veterans appear to be better off in terms of some key socio-economic indicators (education, employment, poverty, health care coverage) than their non-Veteran minority counterparts.

However, when minority Veterans are compared with each other, their results mirror those of the population in general. American Indian and Alaska Natives have the highest poverty and uninsured rates. Asians have high levels of college education. High percentages of Hispanics and Asian are employed.

Without controlling for specific factors, it is difficult to determine whether minority status, Veteran status, age, sex, or something else explains the differences between groups.

Research notes on minorities and barriers to health care

Attitudinal barriers, such as past experiences in health care, mistrust of health professionals and institutions, and perceptions of discrimination or unfair treatment, contribute to underutilization of health care services and non-adherence to recommendations from health professionals. *(Source: Casagrande et al. "Perceived Discrimination and Adherence to Medical Care in a Racially Integrated Community" Journal of General Internal Medicine, 2007.)*

Ethnic and racial minority women within the U.S. are less likely to use breast cancer screening (BCS) procedures than non-Latina White women, and are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer at later stages of disease. Mexican origin women reported the lowest rates of past-year mammograms and clinical breast examination. Factors enabling healthcare moderated the group's lower likelihood of mammograms and clinical breast examination. Some breast cancer screening parity appears to have been achieved in 2007 for Black and some Latina groups; however, those rates lag behind for the largest Latino ethnic group, Mexican. *(Source: Miranda, P. Y., Tarraf, W., & González, H. M. (2011). Breast cancer screening and ethnicity in the United States: implications for health disparities research. Breast cancer research and treatment, 128(2), 535-542.)*

Guadagnolo et al. found that Native Americans were significantly less likely to trust health care providers, clinics, and hospitals than non-Hispanic Whites. They also expressed lower levels of satisfaction with the health care system than non-Hispanic Whites. *(Source: Guadagnolo et al, "Medical Mistrust and Less Satisfaction With Health Care Among Native Americans Presenting for Cancer Treatment" Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 2009)*

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, infrequent medical visits by minorities may be due to fear of deportation, language and cultural barriers, or lack of health insurance. American Indian and Alaska Natives may also deal with issues of geographic isolation, inadequate sewer disposal, and low income. Hispanics may have additional issues related to transportation as many reside in rural areas. *(Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health)*

Notes about Life Expectancy and Health Concerns

Hispanics live longer than non-Hispanics

Life expectancy = 81.2 years

White non-Hispanic life expectancy = 78.8

Black non-Hispanic life expectancy = 74.7

(Source: National Center for Health Statistics. Health, United States, 2011: With Special Feature on Socioeconomic Status and Health. Hyattsville, MD. 2012,

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus/contents2011.htm#022)

In 2006, Asian American women had the highest life expectancy (85.8 years) of any other ethnic group in the U.S. Life expectancy varies among Asian subgroups: Filipino (81.5 years), Japanese (84.5 years), and Chinese women (86.1 years)

(Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health.

http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlID=53)

Diabetes **(2010)**

Compared with White non-Hispanics:

Blacks and Hispanics are 1.7 times as likely

AIAN are 2.1 times as likely

Japanese (1.8), Filipinos (1.8) and Native Hawaiians (2.1) in Hawaii have a higher risk

Heart Disease (2010)

Compared with White non-Hispanics:

Asians and Hispanics are less likely

AIAN are 1.2 times as likely

In 2009, Black men were 1.3 times as likely to die from heart disease

AIDS (2010)

Compared with White non-Hispanics:

Asians are less likely

Blacks are 9.8 times as likely

AIAN are 1.6 times as likely

Hispanics are 3.1 times as likely

Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders are 2.2 times as likely

Stroke (2010)

Compared with White non-Hispanics:

Asians and Hispanics are less likely

Blacks are 1.6 times as likely

AIAN are 2.4 times as likely

Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders are 4.2 times as likely

(Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health. http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=1&lvlID=2)

Implications for VA: Providing the best care to Minority Veterans

Understanding the greater context of life for minorities can help VA assess the current needs of the population it serves and anticipate future needs. Minority Veterans:

- Made up approximately 20% of the total Veteran population
- Made up approximately 33% of the women Veteran population
- Are younger overall than White, non-Hispanic Veterans
  - Median age is 54-57 versus 64 for White, non-Hispanic Veterans
- Have, in general, higher rates of diabetes, heart disease, AIDS and strokes

Current demographic changes in the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) will affect the composition of Veteran population in the long-term.

- The oldest Veterans in the current Veteran population are from a draft-era military—one which was overwhelmingly male and Caucasian.
- The Veteran population is projected to decrease from 22.7 million in year 2011 to 14.5 million in 2040. Over this same time period, the percentage of minorities Veterans will increase from 20.9 to 34.0 percent.
- These demographic changes in the military population since the advent of the AVF in 1973 will have an impact on the overall Veteran population that the Department of Veterans Affairs will serve.

Contact Information

Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of Policy and Planning

National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

For general inquiries, please email us at VANCVAS@va.gov.