



# Veteran's Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Participants: 2012 American Community Survey

Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

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# Data Source and Methods

- Data for this analysis come from the one year 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)
  - The ACS is an ongoing survey that provides annual data on the social and economic characteristics of the U.S. population
  - PUMS files are untabulated records at the person and household level, which allows users to make customized tables
- The universe for this analysis is the civilian population 18 years and older living in the United States
- Veteran status was collected at the individual level, and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) use was collected at the household level. This study measures Veterans and non-Veterans living in households where someone receives SNAP
- All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level
  - A “statistically significant difference” simply means there is statistical evidence that there is a difference; it does not mean the difference is necessarily large, important or significant in the usual sense of the word
  - A “no statistically significant difference” means that there is statistical evidence that there is no difference in the comparative percentages/rates
- For more information about the ACS, see: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

# About SNAP

## SNAP Program

- The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest nutritional assistance program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture and serves as a key social safety net program in the United States
- Households must meet income and resource thresholds to receive SNAP. Typically gross income is below 130% of poverty level and households may have no more than \$2,000 in countable resources or \$3,250 if at least someone is elderly or disabled. For a family of four, net monthly income of \$1,960 would qualify for SNAP. The income threshold increases as the household size increases
  - There are several deductions, including medical expenses for disabled or elderly family members, dependent care costs, and child support payments, that applicants subtract from net income to determine eligibility
- The monthly benefit is determined by multiplying the household income by 0.3 and then subtracting this from the maximum benefit. Maximum benefit for a family of four is \$668
- Recipients receive a card, similar to a bank card, to make purchases at grocery stores and some farmers markets. SNAP can only be used to buy food for home consumption. This excludes alcohol and tobacco products

Source: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

# About the Veteran Community

- Veteran population differs from general U.S. population
- When comparing Veterans and non-Veterans, key differences in gender, age, and racial/ethnic composition are a product of social policies and selection standards. Veteran population is:
  - Predominately male: 92.5% male compared with 44.3% for the general population
  - Older: 45.1% over age 65 compared with 15.1% for the general population
  - Predominantly White: 79.2% White versus 63.7% for the general population
  - More disabled: 27.4% compared with 14.1% for the general population
  - More educated: 26.5% with a Bachelor degree or higher compared with 26.1% for the general population

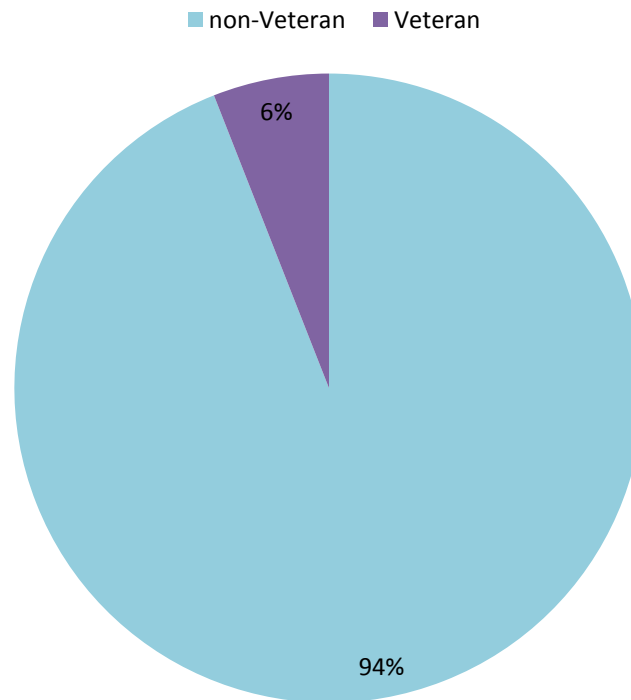
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# Why SNAP Veterans?

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must understand Veterans' health, economic, and mental needs to serve them. Food security is an important part of a Veteran's wellbeing. VA can serve Veteran SNAP participants better when there is a better understanding of Veterans utilizing this program
- There have been many studies identifying the characteristics associated with a higher probability of using SNAP. These studies focused on the general population but not on Veterans. This research supplements literature on SNAP by focusing on Veterans

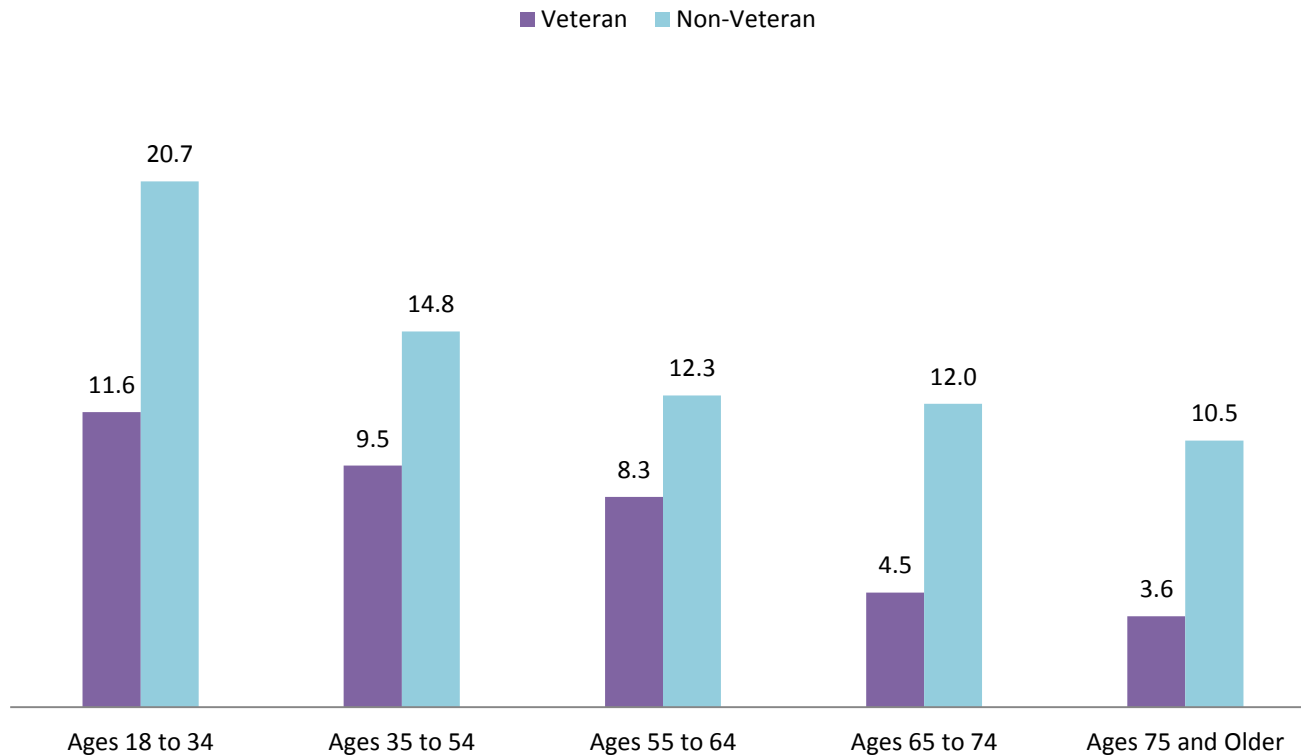
# 6% of SNAP Households with Veterans

Veteran SNAP households and non-Veteran SNAP households  
2012



# For all ages, a lower percentage of Veterans live in households using SNAP than non-Veterans

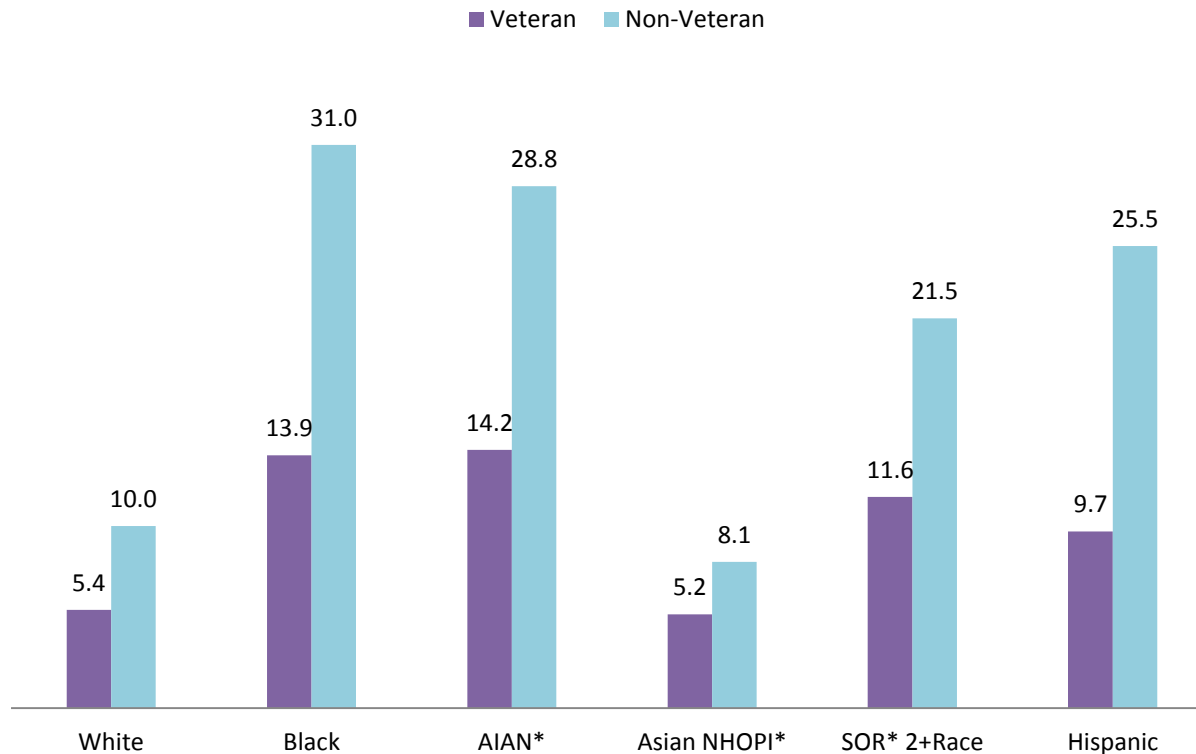
## Veterans and Non-Veteran Households Using SNAP by Age 2012 (in percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# Regardless of race or origin, Veterans households use SNAP at a much lower rate than non-Veteran households

## Veterans and Non-Veteran Households Using SNAP by Race or Origin 2012 (in percent)



\*AIAN: American Indian and Alaskan Native

NHOPI: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

SOR 2+Race: Some Other Race or 2 or More Races

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

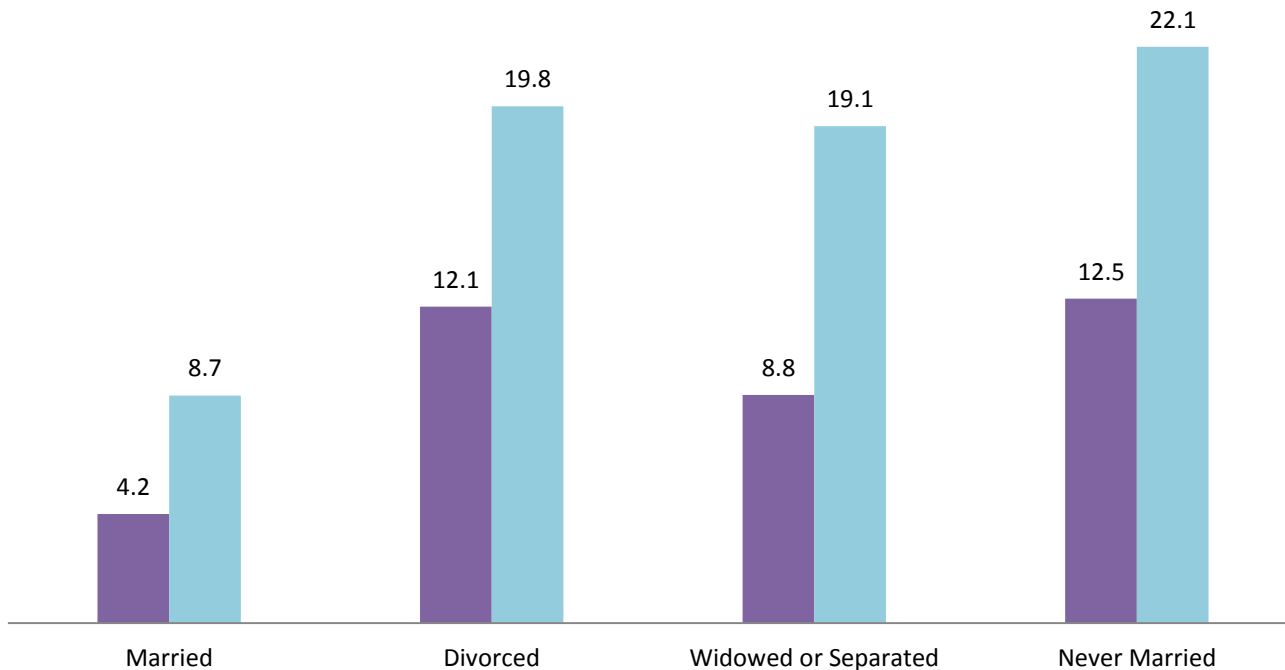


# Regardless of marital status, Veteran households use SNAP at a much lower rate than non-Veteran households

## Veterans and Non-Veteran Households Using SNAP by Marital Status 2012

(in percent)

■ Veteran ■ Non-Veteran

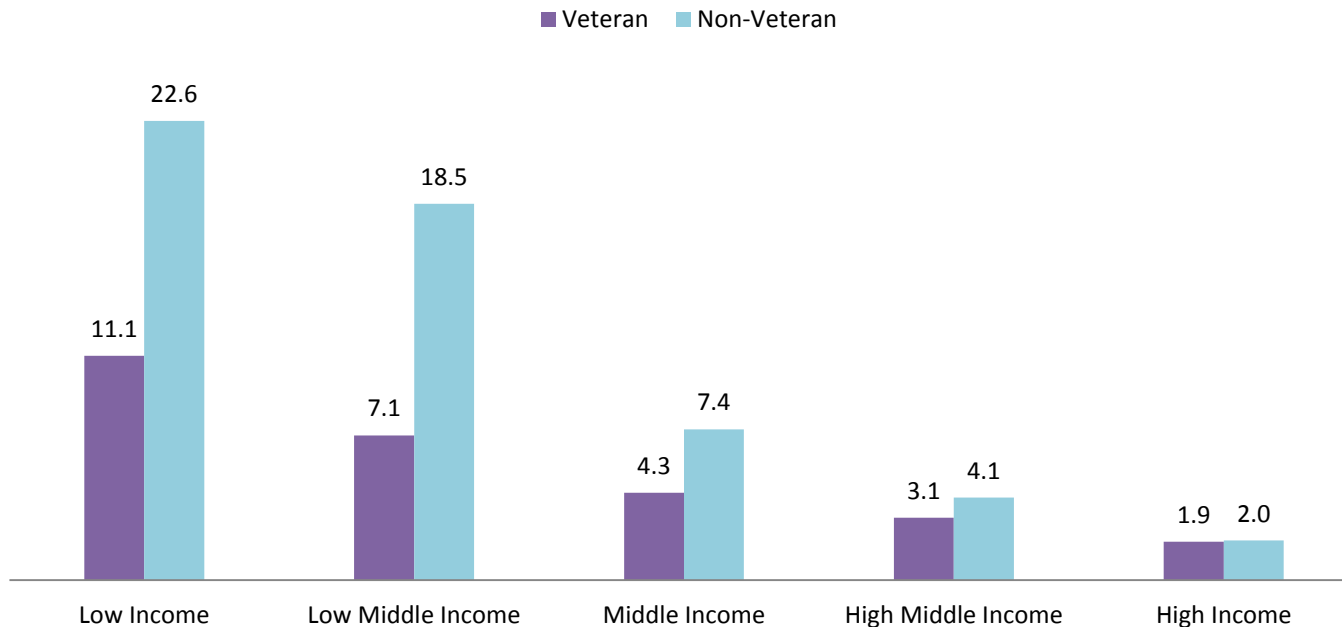


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# Fewer low income Veteran households use SNAP than non-Veteran households, but at middle or high incomes, impact of Veteran status on SNAP participation lessens

## Veteran and Non-Veteran Households Using SNAP by Household Income 2012

(in percent)



The difference for high income is not statistically different at the 90% confidence level.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

### Income Range Definitions

**Low Income:** Less than \$25,000

**Low Middle Income:** More than or equal to \$25,000 and less than \$50,000

**Middle Income:** More than or equal to \$50,000 and less than \$75,000

**High Middle Income:** More than or equal to \$75,000 and less than \$100,000

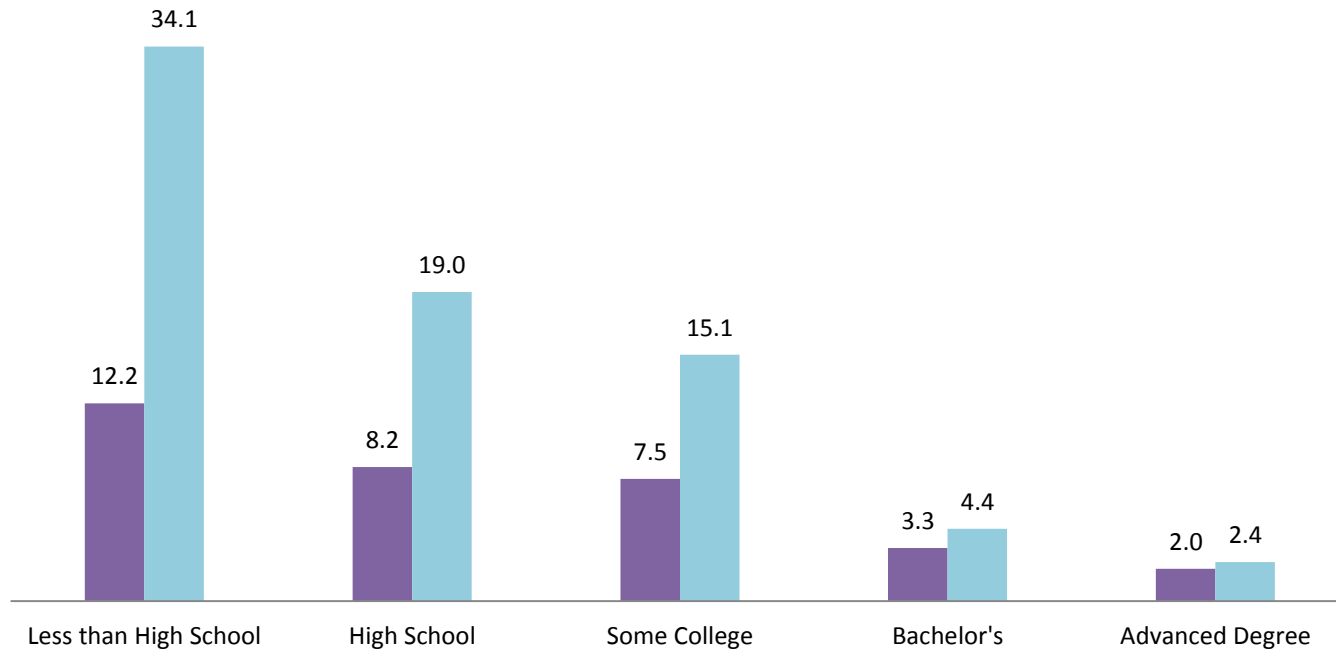
**High Income:** More than or equal to \$100,000

# Fewer less educated Veteran are in Households use SNAP than non-Veterans, but above Bachelors degree level, impact of Veteran status on SNAP participation lessens

## Veteran and Non-Veteran Households Using SNAP by Education Level 2012

(in percent)

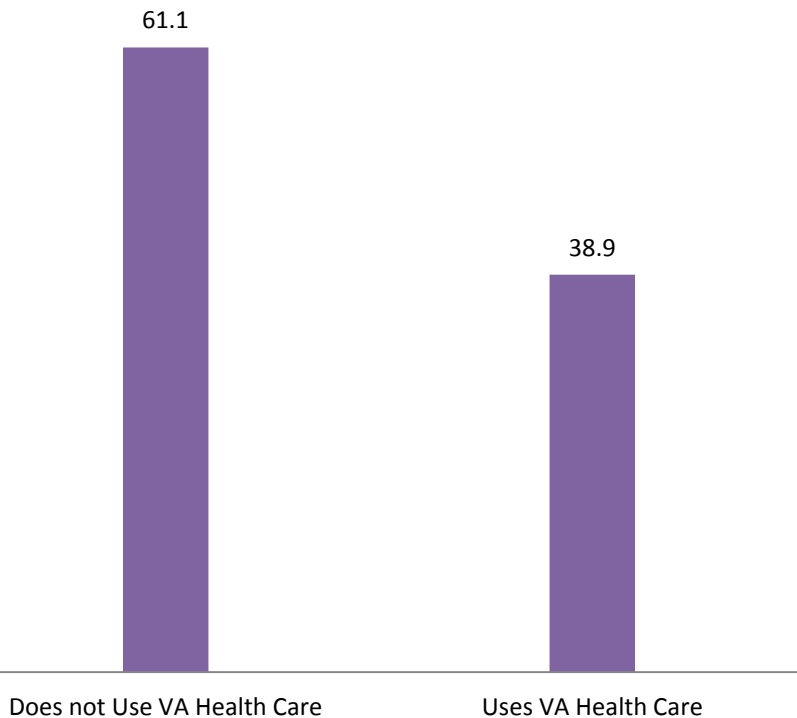
■ Veteran ■ Non-Veteran



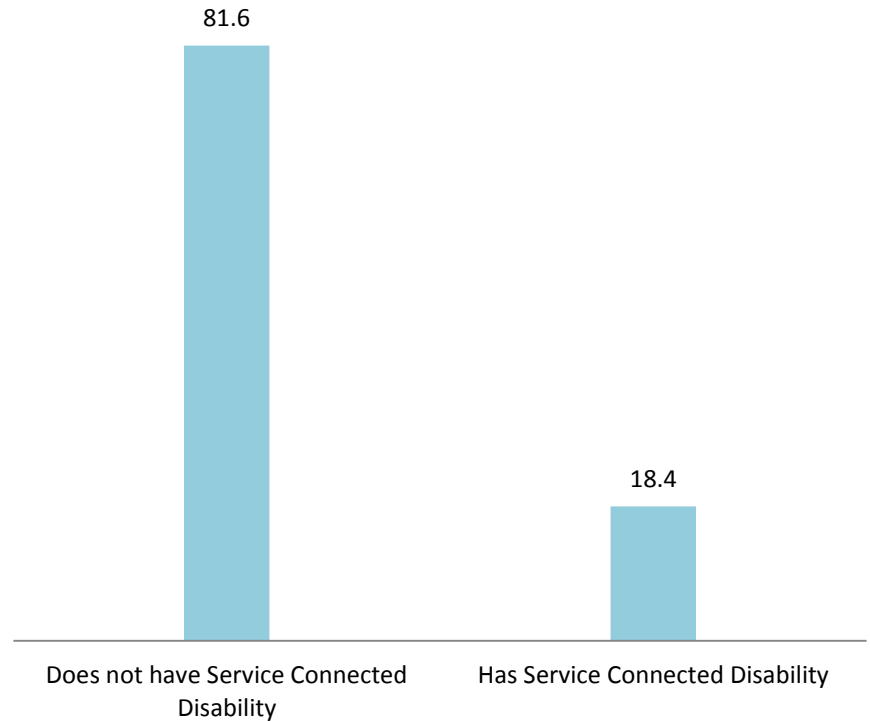
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# Most Veterans in SNAP Households do not use VA health care or have a service connected disability

## Veterans in SNAP Households who Use or do not Use VHA 2012 (in Percent)



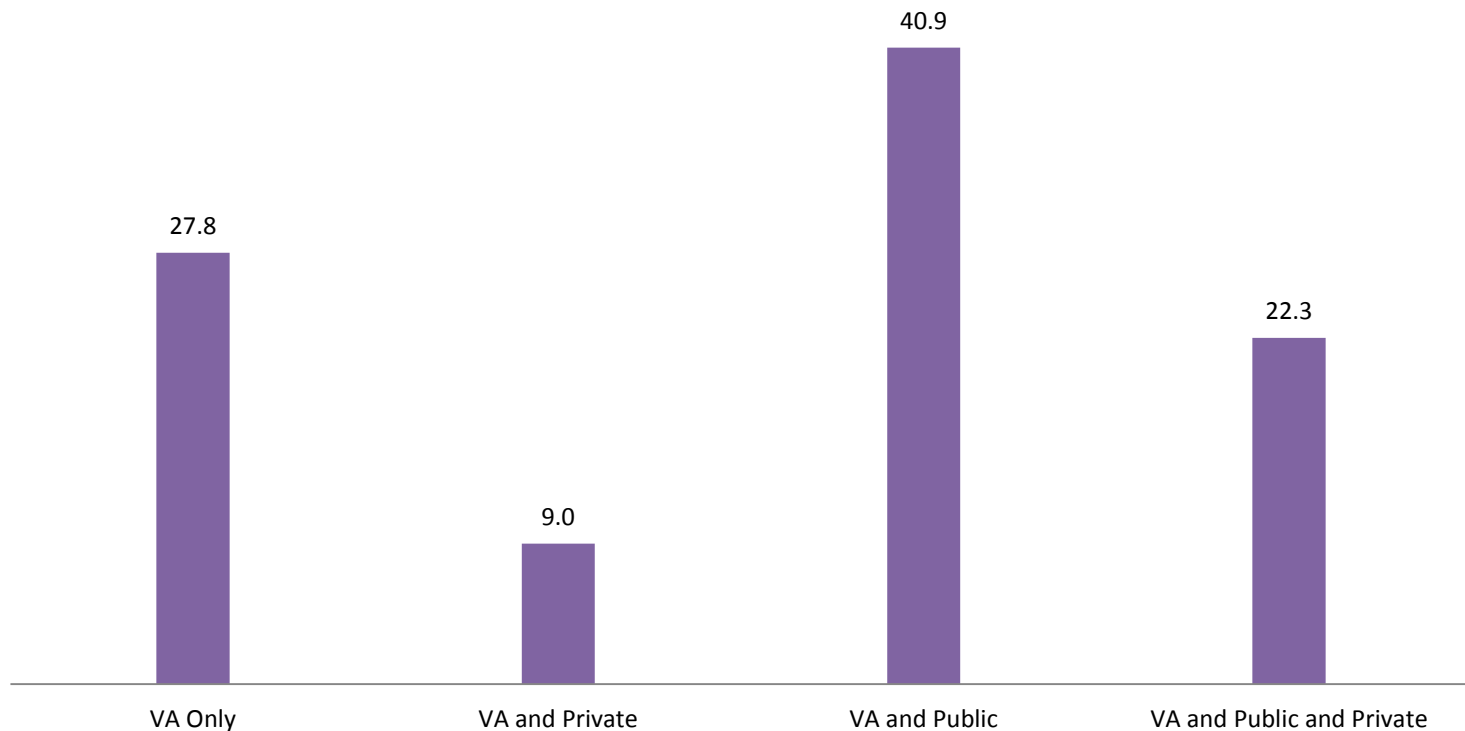
## Veterans in SNAP Households with or without a Service Connected Disability 2012 (in Percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# Of the Veterans in SNAP Households who use VA health care, most use a combination of VA and public health care

Veterans in SNAP Households who Use VHA by Type of Use  
2012  
(in Percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# Comparison of Veteran and Non-Veteran SNAP Households 2012

|  | Veteran SNAP Participants | Non-Veteran SNAP Participants |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Median Household Income                                | \$34,716                  | \$19,998                      |
| With Children  | 22%                       | 46%                           |
| Average Number of Children in Households with Children | 2.0                       | 2.1                           |
| In poverty   | 34%                       | 54%                           |
| Median Age   | 57                        | 44                            |
| Male   | 87%                       | 32%                           |
| Disabled   | 41%                       | 30%                           |
| Born in the U.S.                                       | 97%                       | 82%                           |

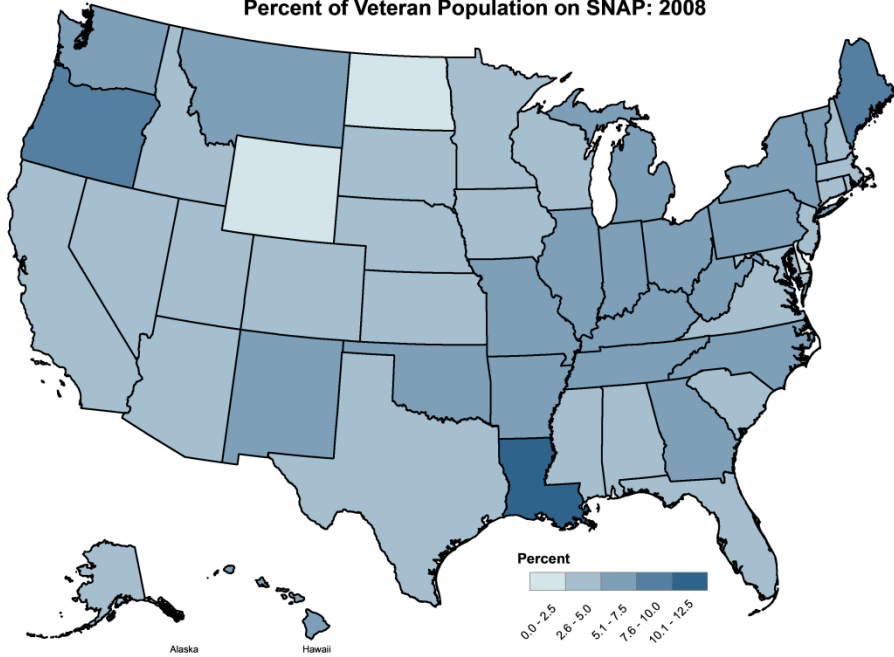
## Veterans in SNAP Households:

- Have higher household income, fewer children, and have a higher percent below the poverty threshold than non-Veterans
- Are older and more are male compared with non-Veterans
- Have a higher percent disabled compared with non-Veterans
- Have a higher percent born in the U.S. compared with non-Veterans

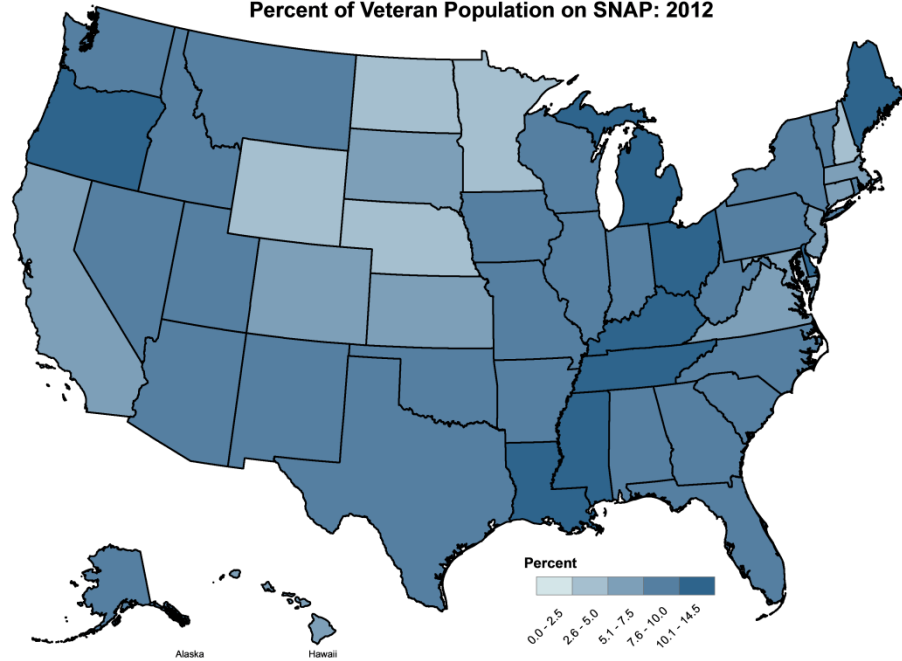
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# Veteran SNAP Use by State

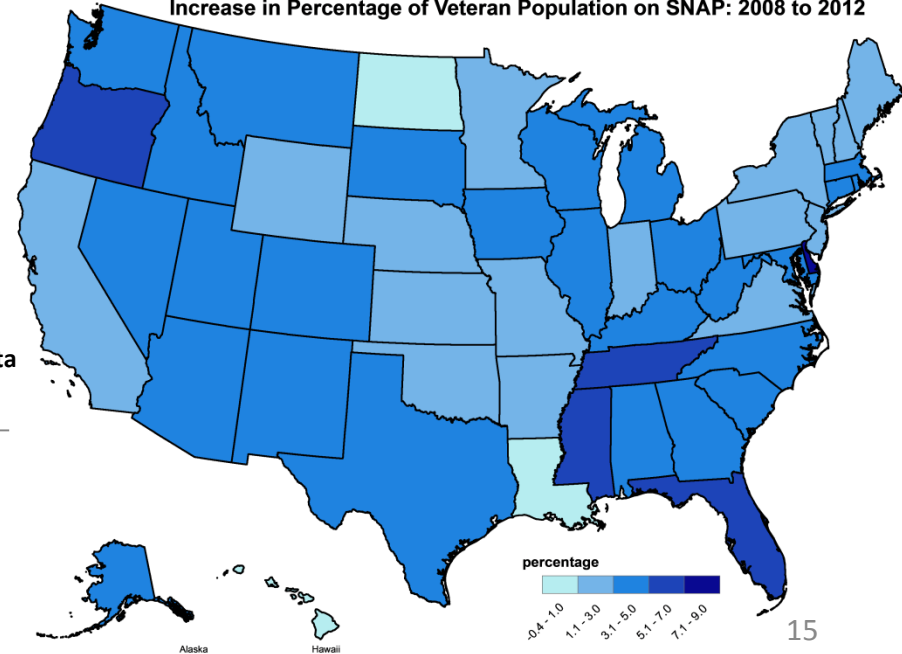
Percent of Veteran Population on SNAP: 2008



Percent of Veteran Population on SNAP: 2012



Increase in Percentage of Veteran Population on SNAP: 2008 to 2012



Percent of Veterans on SNAP: 2008 to 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008 to 2012

# States with Highest and Lowest Veteran SNAP Utilization

## States with Highest Percent of Veterans in SNAP Households 2012

| State                | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------|
| Oregon               | 14.5       |
| Tennessee            | 12.5       |
| Maine                | 11.6       |
| Michigan             | 11.4       |
| Louisiana            | 10.6       |
| District of Columbia | 10.3       |
| Ohio                 | 10.3       |
| Mississippi          | 10.1       |
| Delaware             | 10.1       |
| Kentucky             | 10.0       |

Oregon has the highest percentage of SNAP households and the second highest increase

Tennessee has the second highest percentage and the third highest increase

Michigan, Ohio, Mississippi, and Delaware also had large percentages and substantial increases

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2008 and 2012

## States with Lowest Percent of Veterans in SNAP Households 2012

| State         | Percentage |
|---------------|------------|
| North Dakota  | 2.7        |
| Wyoming       | 4.2        |
| New Hampshire | 4.5        |
| Nebraska      | 4.9        |
| Minnesota     | 5.0        |
| Virginia      | 5.2        |
| New Jersey    | 5.4        |
| Kansas        | 5.5        |
| California    | 5.5        |
| Hawaii        | 6.1        |

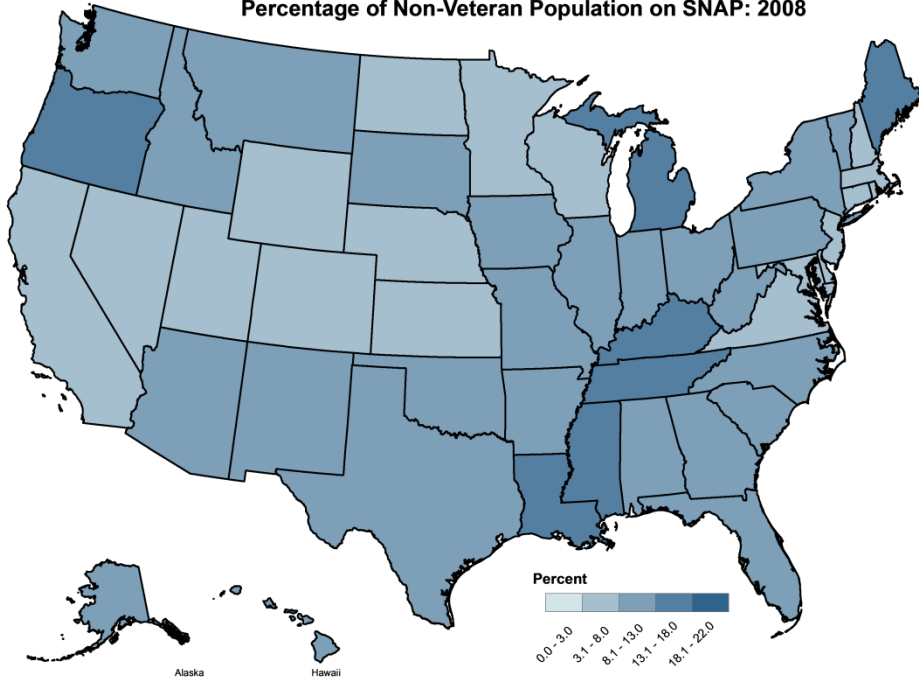
## States with Largest Percent Increase of Veterans in SNAP Households from 2008 to 2012

| State       | Percent change |
|-------------|----------------|
| Delaware    | 8.3            |
| Oregon      | 6.3            |
| Tennessee   | 5.6            |
| Mississippi | 5.6            |
| Florida     | 5.2            |
| Ohio        | 5.0            |
| Alabama     | 4.8            |
| Wisconsin   | 4.7            |
| Washington  | 4.6            |
| Michigan    | 4.5            |

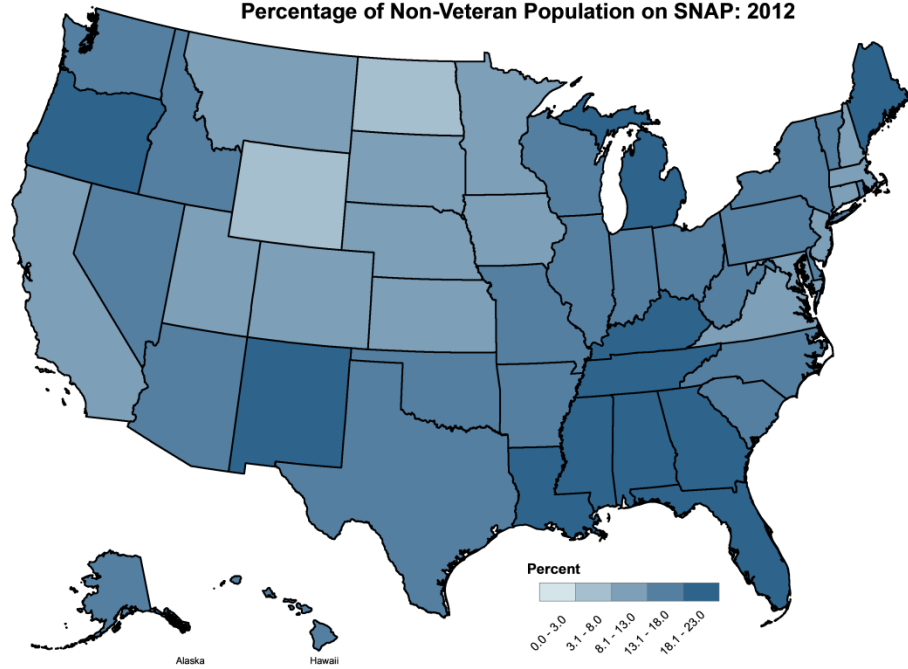


# Non-Veteran SNAP Use by State

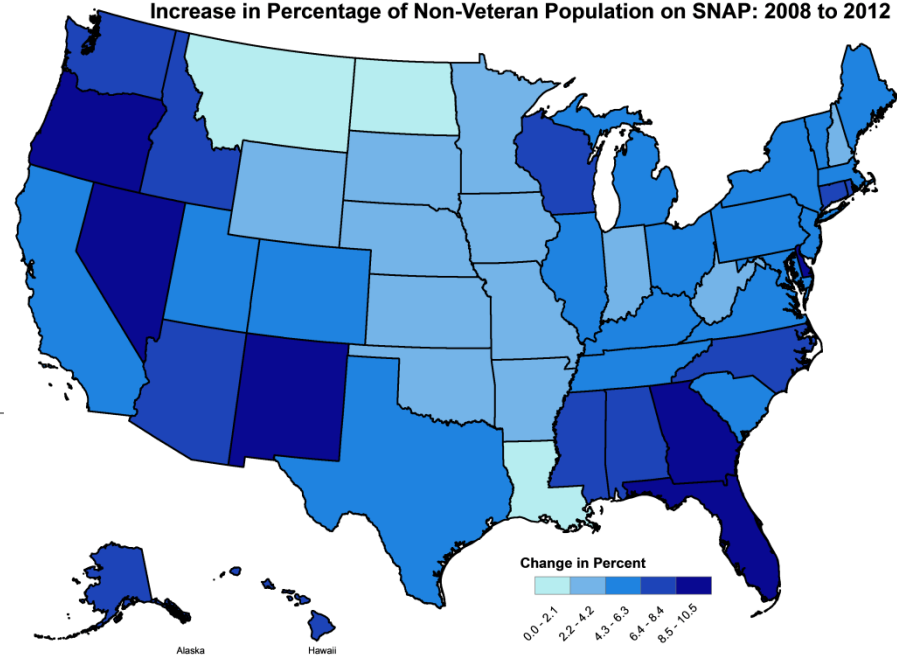
Percentage of Non-Veteran Population on SNAP: 2008



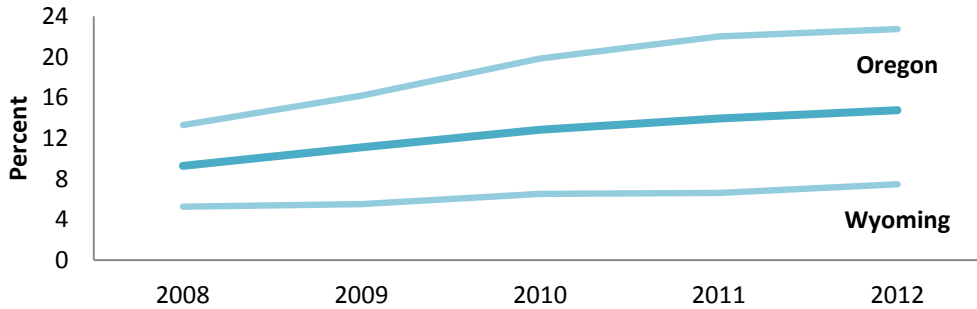
Percentage of Non-Veteran Population on SNAP: 2012



Increase in Percentage of Non-Veteran Population on SNAP: 2008 to 2012



Percent of Non-Veterans in SNAP Households: 2008 to 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008 to 2012

# States with Highest and Lowest Non-Veteran SNAP Utilization

## States with Highest Percent of Non-Veterans in SNAP Households 2012

| State       | Percent |
|-------------|---------|
| Oregon      | 22.7    |
| Mississippi | 21.8    |
| New Mexico  | 19.7    |
| Tennessee   | 19.4    |
| Louisiana   | 19.2    |
| Michigan    | 19.1    |
| Florida     | 19.0    |
| Kentucky    | 18.7    |
| Georgia     | 18.7    |
| Maine       | 18.5    |

Oregon has the highest percentage of SNAP households and the third highest increase

New Mexico has the third highest percentage for non-Veterans and the second highest increase

Mississippi, Florida, and Georgia also had large percentages in SNAP use and large increases

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2008 and 2012

## States with Lowest Percent of Non-Veterans in SNAP Households 2012

| State         | Percent |
|---------------|---------|
| Wyoming       | 7.5     |
| North Dakota  | 7.7     |
| Nebraska      | 8.9     |
| New Hampshire | 8.9     |
| Minnesota     | 9.2     |
| New Jersey    | 9.4     |
| Kansas        | 10.2    |
| Colorado      | 10.7    |
| Utah          | 10.7    |
| California    | 11.2    |

## States with Largest Percent Increase of Non-Veterans in SNAP Households from 2008 to 2012

| State        | Percent change |
|--------------|----------------|
| Florida      | 10.5           |
| New Mexico   | 9.6            |
| Oregon       | 9.4            |
| Delaware     | 9.2            |
| Nevada       | 8.8            |
| Georgia      | 8.7            |
| Mississippi  | 8.0            |
| Rhode Island | 8.0            |
| Idaho        | 7.9            |
| Washington   | 7.5            |

# Comparison of Veteran and Non-Veteran SNAP Use by State

- In 2012 Oregon had the highest percent of Veterans (14.7%) and non-Veterans (22.7%) in households receiving SNAP. Oregon had the largest increase for Veterans and third largest increase for non-Veterans in SNAP households from 2008 to 2012
- In 2012 North Dakota had a lowest percent of Veterans (2.7%) and second lowest percent of non-Veterans (7.7%) in households receiving SNAP
- In 2012 Ohio(10.3%) , District of Columbia (10.3%) , and Delaware (10.1%) were in the ten states with the highest percent of Veterans participating in SNAP, but they were not in the top ten for non-Veterans
- Oregon, Delaware, Mississippi, Georgia, and Washington were in the top ten states with the largest percentage point increase of Veterans and non-Veterans receiving SNAP from 2008 to 2012
- Ohio, Tennessee, Alabama, Wisconsin, and Michigan were in the top ten states with the largest percentage point increase of Veterans in SNAP households from 2008 to 2012 but not in the top ten states for non-Veterans
- All but five states, Montana, South Dakota, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Wyoming, had larger increases in non-Veterans in SNAP households from 2008 to 2012 than Veterans

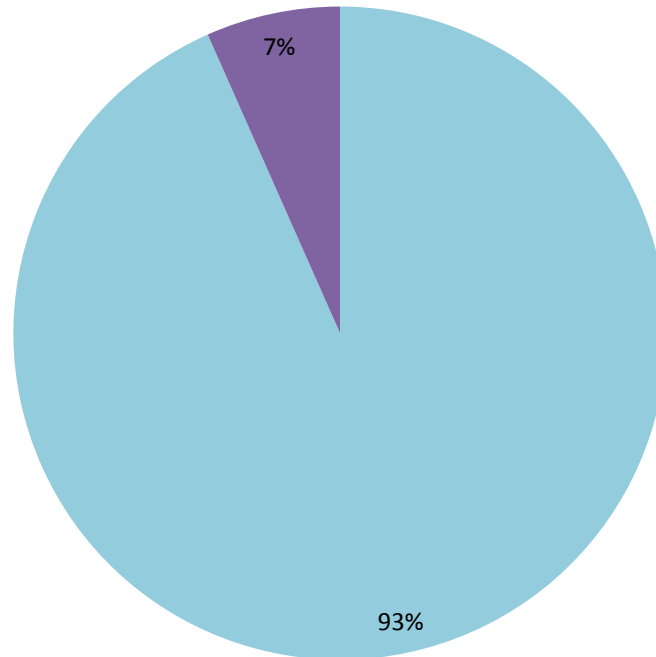
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# 7% of Veteran Households use SNAP

Veterans using SNAP and not using SNAP

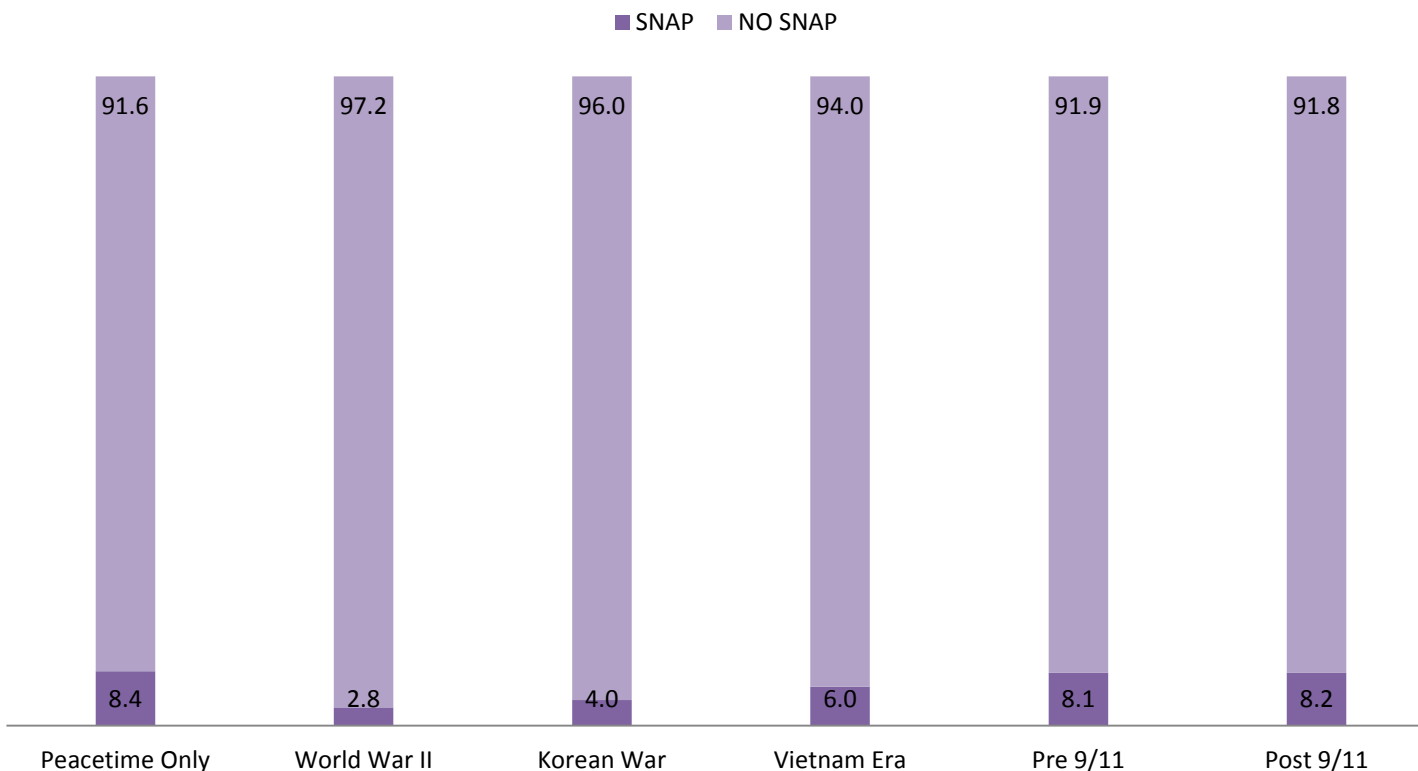
2012

■ No SNAP ■ SNAP



# A higher percent of peacetime only, Pre 9/11, and Post 9/11 era Veterans live in households using SNAP than older World War II or Korean War era Veterans

## Veterans Using SNAP by Period of Service 2012 (in percent)



Note: Periods of service are mutually exclusive. Veterans cannot serve in more than one period.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# Comparison of Veteran SNAP and Non-SNAP Households 2012

|  | Veteran SNAP Participants | Veteran Non-SNAP Participants |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Median Household Income                                | \$34,716                  | \$67,995                      |
| With Children  | 22%                       | 13%                           |
| Average Number of Children in Households with Children | 2                         | 2                             |
| In poverty   | 34%                       | 5%                            |
| Median Age   | 57                        | 64                            |
| Male   | 87%                       | 94%                           |
| Disabled   | 41%                       | 26%                           |
| Born in the U.S.*                                      | 97%                       | 97%                           |

## Veteran in SNAP Households:

- Have less household income than Veterans who do not use SNAP
- Have more children in the home than Veteran non-SNAP households
- Have a higher percent in poverty than Veterans in households who do not use SNAP
- Are six years younger than Veterans not participating in SNAP
- Have a higher percent who are women than Veterans not in SNAP households
- Have a higher percent who are disabled than Veterans in households who do not participate in SNAP

\* Born in the U.S. figures are not significantly different

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey , 2012

# Summary

## Veteran and Non-Veteran SNAP Households

- For all ages, a lower percentage of Veterans live in households using SNAP than non-Veterans
- Regardless of race, ethnicity, or marital status Veterans households use SNAP at a lower rate than non-Veteran households
- Veterans in SNAP households have higher incomes, fewer children, and a smaller percent living below the poverty threshold than non-Veterans
- Veterans in SNAP households are older and have a higher percent who are male compared with non-Veterans
- A higher percent of Veterans in SNAP households have a disability compared with non-Veterans

## Veterans in SNAP and non-SNAP Households

- Veteran SNAP users have smaller average household incomes than Veterans not using SNAP
- A higher percent of Veteran SNAP users have children in the home than Veteran non-SNAP households
- A higher percent of Veteran SNAP households are in poverty than Veteran households not using SNAP
- On average, SNAP users are six years younger than Veterans not participating in SNAP
- A higher percent of Veteran SNAP users are female
- A higher percent of Veterans in SNAP households are disabled than Veterans not in SNAP households

# Contact Information For This Report

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