

★ 2019 ★

---

**ANNUAL WARRIOR SURVEY**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

---



**WOUNDED WARRIOR  
PROJECT®**

**Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is a leading veterans service organization focused on transforming the way the post-9/11 generation and future generations of veterans are empowered, employed, and engaged in our communities.** Our direct service programs, advocacy efforts, and collaboration among best-in-practice veteran and military organizations advance WWP's vision: to foster the most successful, well-adjusted generation of wounded service members in our nation's history.

Wounded Warrior Project's Annual Warrior Survey continues to be the largest, most statistically relevant survey of injured post-9/11 veterans. With 35,908 respondents, the 2019 Annual Warrior Survey boasts the highest number of participants in its 10-year history.

---

---

★ **GIVING WARRIORS A VOICE:**



I KNOW THAT PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY LETS MY VOICE GET HEARD AND MY STORY GET TOLD. THIS IS MY CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT I NEED, WHAT HELPS, AND WHAT AREAS I STRUGGLE WITH. IF NOT US, THEN WHO?"

— WOUNDED WARRIOR

---

★ **PROTECTING VETERANS' RIGHTS:**



AS A MEMBER OF THE WWP WASHINGTON, DC LEGISLATIVE TEAM, I FIND THAT THIS DATA IS NOT ONLY INVALUABLE IN ADVOCATING FOR THE WWP POPULATION TO CONGRESS, BUT ALSO HELPS US MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ON WHAT OUR ALUMNI WANT FROM CONGRESS."

— WWP TEAMMATE

---

★ **INFORMING WWP'S LIFESAVING PROGRAMS:**



THE FEEDBACK OUR TEAMS RECEIVE FROM THE ANNUAL WARRIOR SURVEY IS THE MOST CRITICAL PIECE OF INFORMATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR BETTERING PROGRAM DELIVERY AND IMPACT. WE LISTEN TO OUR WARRIORS' VOICES."

— WWP TEAMMATE



### ★ SURVEY OBJECTIVE

The 2019 Wounded Warrior Project Annual Warrior Survey was the 10th annual administration of the survey. The first survey, in 2010, collected baseline data on WWP warriors. The subsequent surveys provide updates and allow WWP to identify changes and trends in the needs of the warriors they serve. WWP uses the annual survey data to build and improve programs that address those needs, and advocate for legislation that makes a difference.

### ★ SURVEY CONTENT

The survey measures a series of domains within the following general topics about WWP warriors: background information (military information and demographic data), physical and mental well-being, and economic empowerment.

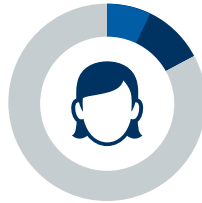
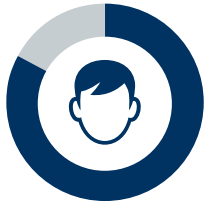
### ★ 2019 SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The web survey was fielded to 109,968 WWP warriors from March 26 to May 22, 2019. Warriors were emailed a prenotification, a survey invitation, and nine email reminders during data collection. In an effort to reach and engage more warriors, we incorporated two new email tactics: targeted messaging and A/B testing the sender (Westat or WWP). The final unweighted response rate for the 2019 survey was 33 percent. After data collection, the survey data was weighted to allow the production of estimates that are representative of the 2019 WWP population of registered warriors.

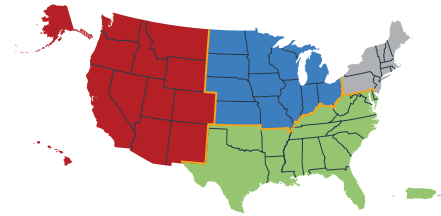
*\*2010 data was not weighted*

# ★ WARRIOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION ★

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



7% IN 2010



**54%** LIVE IN THE SOUTH

**24%** LIVE IN THE WEST

**13%** LIVE IN THE MIDWEST

**10%** LIVE IN THE NORTHEAST



AVERAGE AGE IS

★ **42** ★

WAS **36** IN 2010



★ **66%** ★

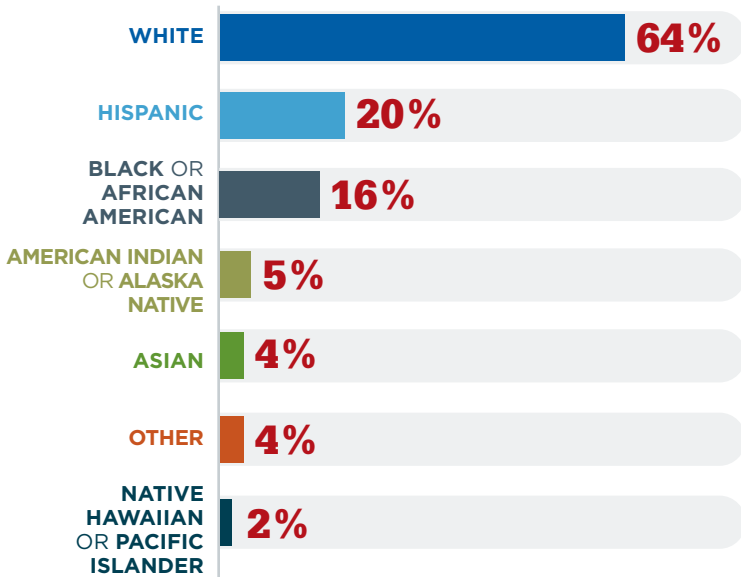
ARE CURRENTLY MARRIED



★ **37%** ★

HAVE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER

## RACE / ETHNICITY



## MILITARY PROFILE

THE 2019 MILITARY PROFILE OF WARRIORS REPRESENTS ALL FOUR SERVICES, THE COAST GUARD, THE NATIONAL GUARD, AND RESERVE.



★ **23%** ★ OF WARRIORS SERVED IN MORE THAN ONE BRANCH.

*\*This is why percentages do not sum to 100.*

**65%** ARMY

**15%** MARINE CORPS

**12%** NAVY

**11%** AIR FORCE

**1%** COAST GUARD

**23%** NATIONAL GUARD OR RESERVE



★ **7%** ★

ARE ACTIVE DUTY

WAS **20%** IN 2014\*

*\*Question was not asked in 2010*



★ **47%** ★

HAVE DEPLOYED THREE OR MORE TIMES



★ **93%** ★

OF WARRIORS WHO HAVE DEPLOYED SINCE 2001 DID SO AT LEAST ONCE TO A COMBAT AREA

## SERVICE-CONNECTED INJURIES AND HEALTH PROBLEMS

★ **91%** ★ EXPERIENCED **MORE THAN THREE** INJURIES OR HEALTH PROBLEMS.

### THE TOP 5 MOST COMMONLY REPORTED INJURIES & HEALTH PROBLEMS

1	SLEEP PROBLEMS	88%
2	POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)	83%
3	ANXIETY	81%
4	DEPRESSION	77%
5	BACK, NECK, OR SHOULDER PROBLEMS	77%



NEARLY

★ **1 IN 3** ★

WARRIORS NEED THE AID AND ATTENDANCE OF ANOTHER PERSON BECAUSE OF THEIR INJURIES AND HEALTH PROBLEMS.

**22%** OF THOSE WHO NEED AID REQUIRE **40+ HOURS PER WEEK**



★ **44%** ★

OF FEMALE WARRIORS EXPERIENCED **MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)**.



★ **90%** ★

ARE RECEIVING COMPENSATION BENEFITS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA).



★ **65%** ★

HAVE A DISABILITY RATING OF **80% OR HIGHER** — **MORE THAN ONE-THIRD** HAVE RATINGS OF **100%**.



★ **70%** ★

OF WARRIORS REPORTED EXPOSURE TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES OR HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS DURING THEIR MILITARY SERVICE.

**HOWEVER, ONLY**

★ **9%** ★

**SAID THEY HAD RECEIVED TREATMENT FOR THEIR EXPOSURE AT THE VA.**



★ **91%** ★

LIVE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS THAT ARE CONSIDERED **SEVERE** — MOST EXPERIENCING MORE THAN ONE.

PTSD	<b>83%</b>
ANXIETY	<b>81%</b>
DEPRESSION	<b>77%</b>
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)	<b>39%</b>

**VETERANS RAND 12-ITEM HEALTH SURVEY**



**WARRIORS SCORE 30% BELOW THE NATIONAL NORM IN PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING**

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES HAVE A NOTABLE IMPACT ON WARRIORS' QUALITY OF LIFE. SCORES BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE ARE ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER CLINICAL AND SOCIAL COSTS. *(Kazis et al., 2006)*

**THIS IMPACT ON QUALITY OF LIFE IS CREATING A DANGEROUS INTERNAL STRUGGLE FOR MANY WARRIORS.**



★ **33%** ★

**OF WARRIORS REPORTED HAVING THOUGHTS RELATED TO SUICIDE IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS.**

*If you or a veteran you know are in need of mental health resources, please reach out to the WWP Resource Center at 888.WWP.ALUM*

**WHILE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES CONTINUE TO ARISE AT AN ALARMING RATE, ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE HAS MADE LITTLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE PAST 10 YEARS.**



★ **32%** ★

**HAD DIFFICULTY GETTING MENTAL HEALTH CARE, PUT OFF GETTING SUCH CARE, OR DID NOT GET THE CARE THEY NEEDED — A MINIMAL IMPROVEMENT FROM 34% IN 2010.**

**THE MOST COMMONLY REPORTED BARRIERS INCLUDE:**

- 1 PERSONAL SCHEDULE (WORK, SCHOOL, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES) CONFLICTED WITH THE HOURS OF OPERATION OF VA HEALTH CARE
- 2 FEAR THAT TREATMENT MIGHT BRING UP PAINFUL OR TRAUMATIC MEMORIES
- 3 INCONSISTENT TREATMENT DUE TO CANCELED APPOINTMENTS, HAVING TO SWITCH PROVIDERS, ETC.
- 4 UNCOMFORTABLE WITH EXISTING RESOURCES WITHIN THE DOD OR VA
- 5 FELT THEY WOULD BE CONSIDERED WEAK FOR SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

**THE TOP 3 RESOURCES USED FOR ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS:**



VA MEDICAL CENTER **65%**



TALKING WITH ANOTHER POST-9/11 VETERAN **41%**



PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION **39%**

★ **PHYSICAL HEALTH** ★



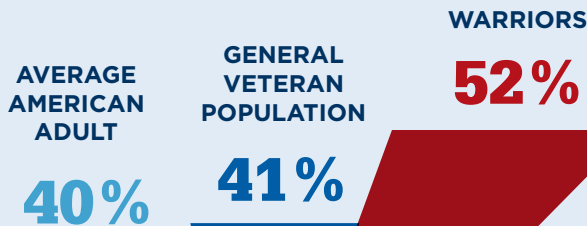
★ **94%** ★

EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL INJURIES THAT ARE CONSIDERED **SEVERE** — MOST EXPERIENCING MORE THAN ONE.

**MOST COMMONLY REPORTED SEVERE PHYSICAL INJURIES:**

<b>1</b>	BACK, NECK, OR SHOULDER PROBLEMS	<b>77%</b>
<b>2</b>	TINNITUS	<b>61%</b>
<b>3</b>	KNEE INJURIES OR PROBLEMS	<b>56%</b>
<b>4</b>	MIGRAINES	<b>53%</b>
<b>5</b>	SEVERE HEARING LOSS	<b>53%</b>

**OBESITY**



PHYSICAL INJURIES, ALONG WITH EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES, CREATE ADDITIONAL BARRIERS TO EXERCISE FOR WARRIORS — MAKING OBESITY A GROWING CONCERN.

**52% OF WARRIORS ARE OBESE (BMI SCORES OF 30+), UP 12% SINCE 2010**

THIS PUTS OVER HALF OF WARRIORS AT HIGH RISK FOR ADDITIONAL HEALTH PROBLEMS INCLUDING TYPE 2 DIABETES, HEART DISEASE, STROKE, KIDNEY DISEASE, AND SLEEP APNEA.



★ **CHIS DIETARY SCREEN**

The typical warrior consumes only 1.7 cups of fruits and vegetables per day — less than half of the minimum recommended amount. Research suggests a healthy diet can be an effective strategy for addressing depression and lowers risk of chronic conditions.



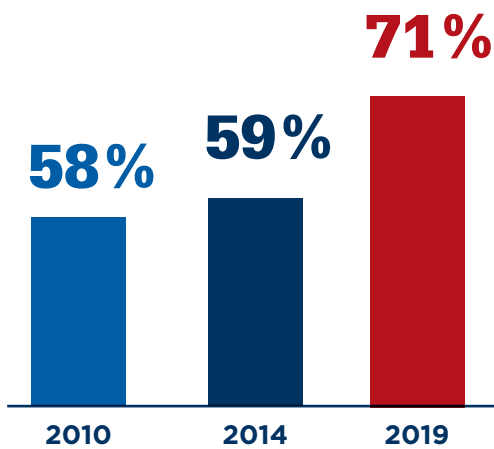
★ **GLOBAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE (GPAQ)**

Less than ¼ of warriors meet physical activity guidelines set by the Department of Health & Human Services — increasing their risk for depression, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, stroke, and certain kinds of cancer.

## ★ CURRENT HEALTH CARE COVERAGE ★

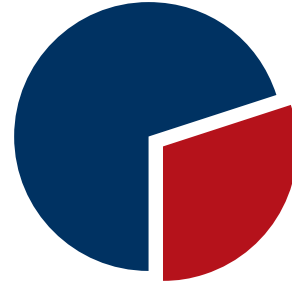


THE PERCENTAGE OF WARRIORS WHO HAVE HEALTH CARE COVERAGE THROUGH THE VA HAS INCREASED BY **★ 12% ★** IN JUST THE PAST FIVE YEARS.



**71% OF WARRIORS RECEIVE SOME HEALTH CARE COVERAGE THROUGH THE VA**

**70%**  
OF THEM CHOOSE THE VA AS THEIR PRIMARY PROVIDER



**30%**  
OF THEM CHOOSE A PRIMARY PROVIDER OTHER THAN THE VA

### TOP THREE REASONS WARRIORS CHOOSE THE VA:

- CAN GET CARE FOR A SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY
- THEY FEEL ENTITLED TO IT
- PRESCRIPTION BENEFITS

### TOP THREE REASONS WARRIORS CHOOSE A DIFFERENT PROVIDER:

- BAD PRIOR EXPERIENCE AT THE VA
- DON'T THINK THE VA HEALTH CARE WOULD BE AS GOOD AS THAT AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE
- VA CARE IS DIFFICULT TO ACCESS

## SOCIAL SUPPORT

VETERANS WITH BETTER SOCIAL SUPPORT HAVE MORE POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES, INCLUDING LOWER RATES OF SUICIDAL IDEATION.

Most warriors report feeling supported by their friends, family members, co-workers, and community members.



★ **79%** ★

AGREED WITH THE STATEMENT

**“There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it.”**



★ **72%** ★

AGREED WITH THE STATEMENT

**“There are people who enjoy the same social activities that I do.”**

## ★ EMPLOYMENT ★

### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



**11.5%**

WWP  
WARRIORS



**3.5%**

ALL VETERANS



**3.5%**

U.S. NATIONAL  
RATE

### WARRIORS CITE THE FOLLOWING AS BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:

- 1** MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES **35%**
- 2** DIFFICULT TO BE AROUND OTHERS **28%**
- 3** NOT PHYSICALLY CAPABLE **20%**
- 4** NOT QUALIFIED — LACK OF EDUCATION **17%**

★ **63%** ★

**LABOR FORCE  
PARTICIPATION RATE**

WARRIORS WORKING FOR AN EMPLOYER THAT HAS AN AFFINITY GROUP OR MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR VETERANS WERE **MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY** TO REPORT BEING TOTALLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR EMPLOYMENT.

## ★ HOMELESSNESS ★



★ **5%** ★

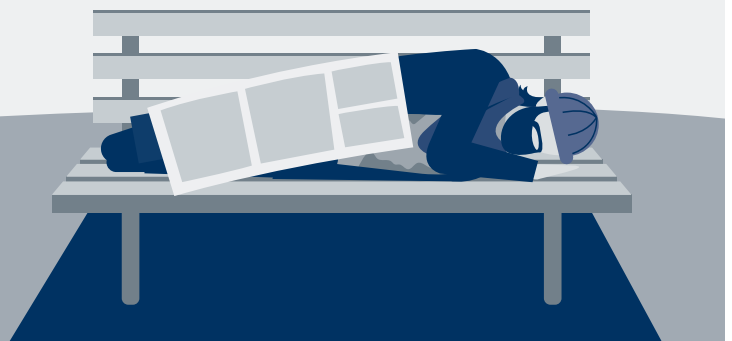
**OF WARRIORS HAVE BEEN HOMELESS** OR LIVED IN A HOMELESS SHELTER DURING THE PAST 24 MONTHS.

**HOMELESSNESS RATE WAS HIGHER AMONG FEMALE WARRIORS AT 6%.**

### AMONG WARRIORS WHO EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS:

★ **76%** ★  
WERE HOMELESS FOR OVER 30 DAYS

★ **19%** ★  
RECEIVED GOVERNMENT HOUSING ASSISTANCE



WARRIORS WHO WERE HOMELESS FOR OVER 30 DAYS SPENT **AN AVERAGE OF 209 DAYS — NEARLY 7 MONTHS — WITHOUT A HOME.**



WARRIORS ARE FEELING BETTER ABOUT THEIR FINANCES, **30% STATING THAT THEIR FINANCIAL STATUS IS BETTER THAN IT WAS A YEAR AGO** — AN IMPROVEMENT FROM 22% IN 2010, AND 23% IN 2014.

FEMALE WARRIORS WERE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THEIR FINANCIAL STATUS IS WORSE THAN A YEAR AGO (29%).

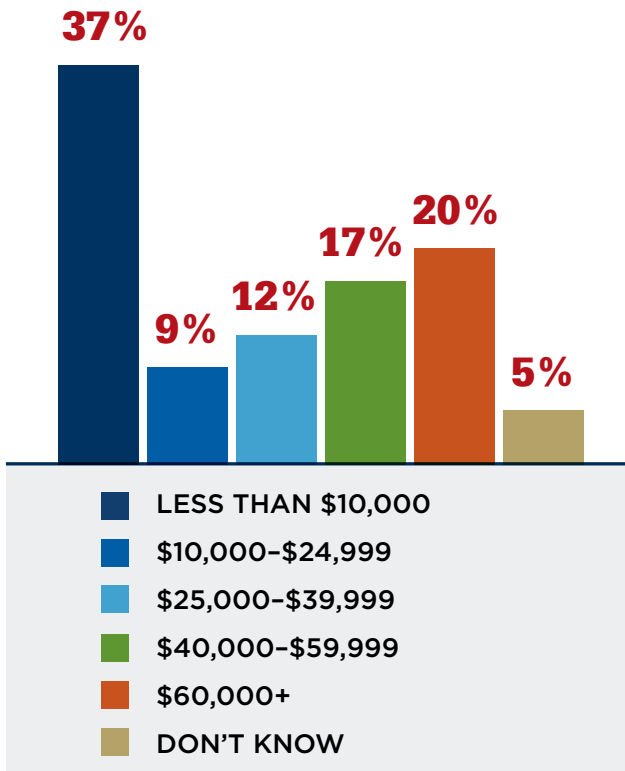
WARRIORS' FINANCES COMPARED WITH A YEAR AGO:



INCOME

WARRIORS REPORTED ON TWO SOURCES OF INCOME THEY RECEIVED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

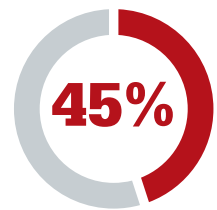
**1** INCOME FROM WORK:



**2** INCOME FROM VARIOUS BENEFIT, CASH ASSISTANCE, AND DISABILITY PROGRAMS:



RECEIVED \$20,000 OR MORE IN INCOME FROM THOSE SOURCES



RECEIVED NO INCOME FROM THOSE SOURCES



## DEBT



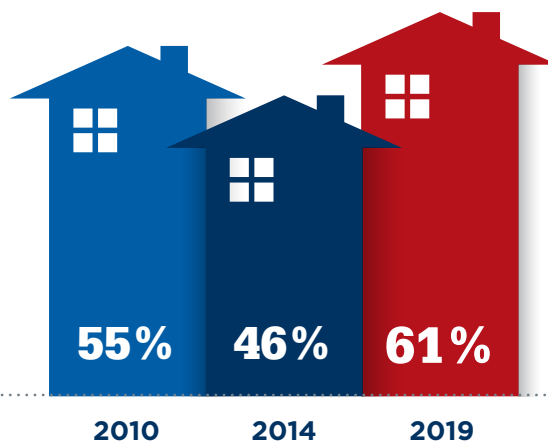
ONLY  
★ **3%** ★  
OF WARRIORS  
ARE DEBT-FREE.

MORE THAN HALF OF WARRIORS  
WITH DEBT OWE \$20,000 OR MORE,  
EXCLUDING MORTGAGES.

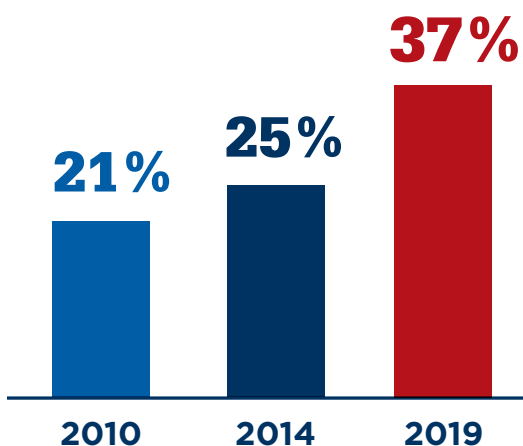
THE MOST COMMON FORMS OF DEBT  
ARE CAR LOANS AND CREDIT CARD DEBT.

## HOMEOWNERSHIP

HOMEOWNERSHIP AMONG WARRIORS  
**REACHED A  
10-YEAR HIGH IN 2019.**



## ★ EDUCATION ★



★ **1 IN 5** ★

WARRIORS ARE NOW ENROLLED IN SCHOOL TO PURSUE  
THE FOLLOWING CREDENTIALS:



**71%**

BACHELOR'S  
DEGREE OR  
HIGHER



**18%**

ASSOCIATE  
DEGREE



**9%**

BUSINESS,  
TECHNICAL, OR  
VOCATIONAL  
SCHOOL TRAINING  
LEADING TO A  
CERTIFICATE OR  
DIPLOMA

### OF THOSE ENROLLED:

**55%**

ARE USING THE POST-9/11 GI BILL

**26%**

ARE USING THE VR&E (VOCATIONAL  
REHABILITATION & EMPLOYMENT) PROGRAM

DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE SURVEY AT

[AnnualWarriorSurvey.com/2019](https://AnnualWarriorSurvey.com/2019)



**WOUNDED WARRIOR  
PROJECT®**

4899 Belfort Road, Suite 300  
Jacksonville, Florida 32256