



# **Department of Veterans Affairs**

## ***National Survey of Veterans (NSV)***

### **Active Duty Service Member Survey**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is xxx-xxxx. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: VA, xxxx

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the NSV Survey Helpline at 1-888-NSV-2009 or send an email to [NSV@westat.com](mailto:NSV@westat.com)

## Instructions to Complete the Survey

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- ◆ To answer a question, simply check the box that best represents your answer.
  - ◆ You will sometimes be asked to skip questions based on your answers. In addition, certain sections of the questionnaire may not apply to you.
  - ◆ Please choose only one answer per question, unless the question indicates *Mark all that apply*.
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**Section A  
Background Questions**

A1. Are you currently on full-time active duty?

- Yes → Go to Question A2  
 No

A1a. Thank you. This survey is intended for those currently serving on active duty. Please return the survey in the enclosed pre-paid return envelope.

A2. In what year did you first enter active duty?

Year

A3. In which branch of the Uniformed Services are you currently serving?

- Army  
 Navy  
 Air Force  
 Marine Corps  
 Coast Guard  
 Other (e.g., the Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Merchant Marine)

A4. During active duty have you ever been exposed to dead, dying, or wounded people?

- Yes  
 No

A5. Were you ever a prisoner of war?

- Yes  
 No

A6. During your military service, have you ever been exposed to environmental hazards such as Agent Orange, chemical warfare agents, ionizing radiation, or other potentially toxic substances?

- Definitely Yes  
 Probably Yes  
 Probably No  
 Definitely No  
 Don't know

**Section B  
Familiarity With VA Benefits and Services**

B1. Below is a list of topics about VA benefits and services. Please indicate whether you have looked for information on these in the past 12 months.

	Yes	No
a. Eligibility for VA health care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. VA health care facility locations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. VA life insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. VA home loans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. VA education and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. VA vocational rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. VA burial and memorial benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. VA disability compensation and pension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. VA benefits for dependents and survivors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. VA prescription benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B2. Please indicate your level of awareness for the following VA benefits and services:

	Very aware	Aware	Somewhat aware	Rarely aware	Not aware at all
a. Eligibility for VA health care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. VA life insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. VA home loans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. VA education and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. VA vocational rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. VA burial and memorial benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. VA disability compensation and pension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. VA benefits for dependents and survivors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. VA prescription benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B3. The new Post-9/11 GI Bill may allow for transfer of education benefits by an eligible servicemember to his or her spouse or dependent child.

**Yes**     **No**     **Does not apply**

- a. Would you consider transferring your entitlement to education benefits to your spouse?
- b. Would you consider transferring your entitlement to education benefits to your dependent child?

B4. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with available information about VA benefits and services?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

B5. In the past year have you used any of the following sources to get information about VA benefits and services? **Mark all that apply.**

- VA web site (www.va.gov)
- Veteran service organization (e.g., American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW, etc.)
- My local VA office
- VA health care facility
- VA Toll-Free Help Line
- VA Veterans Benefits Handbook
- A Veteran
- Other → **Please specify below**

- Have **not** sought information about VA benefits and services → **Go to Question B6**



Question B6 appears in the next column.

B5a. Of all the information sources you have used, which one was the most difficult to use?

- VA web site (www.va.gov)
- Veteran service organization (e.g., American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars – VFW, etc.)
- My local VA office
- VA health care facility
- VA Toll-Free Help Line
- VA Veterans Benefits Handbook
- A Veteran
- Other → **Please specify below**

B5b. Of all the information sources you have used, which one was the easiest to use?

- VA web site (www.va.gov)
- Veteran service organization (e.g., American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW, etc.)
- My local VA office
- VA health care facility
- VA Toll-Free Help Line
- VA Veterans Benefits Handbook
- A Veteran
- Other → **Please specify below**

B6. How would you most prefer to get answers to your VA questions?

- Mail
- Telephone
- Email
- Face to face
- Internet site

B7. How would you least prefer to get answers to your VA questions?

- Mail
- Telephone
- Email
- Face to face
- Internet site

### Section C Health Status

C1. In general, would you say your health is...

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

C2. Do you plan to use VA health care services once you separate from active duty service?

- Yes → Go to Question C3
- No
- Not Sure → Go to Section D

C2a. Why do you not plan on using VA health care services? → **Please specify below**

**QUESTION C2a SKIPS TO SECTION D  
IN THE NEXT COLUMN →**

C3. Which of the following **best** describes the primary way you plan on using VA Health Care in the future? **Mark only one.**

- Your primary source of healthcare
- Backup to non-VA care for some minor services
- A “safety net” to use only if needed
- For prescriptions
- For specialized care
- Some other way

Section D appears in the next column.

### Section D Education and Training

These next few questions ask about your experience with education and training benefits.

D1. Have you ever used the military’s Tuition Assistance (TA) program?

- Yes
- No

D2. Have you used any VA education or training benefits? **Do not include the military’s Tuition Assistance program.**

- Yes
- No → Go to Question D3

D2a. How did you use the VA education benefit? **Mark all that apply.**

- Took college or university coursework leading to a bachelor or graduate degree
- Attended business, technical or vocational school training leading to a certificate or diploma
- Participated in an apprenticeship or on-job training program
- Took correspondence courses
- Took flight training
- Received tutorial assistance, refresher courses, or deficiency training
- Attended a teacher certification program
- Did something else → **Please specify below**

D2b. Did you complete your training, or receive the primary degree or certificate for which you were enrolled and receiving VA education benefits?

- Yes
- No

Question D3 appears on the next page.

D2c. How important were your VA education benefits in helping you meet your educational goals?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

**QUESTION D2c SKIPS TO SECTION E BELOW ↓**

D3. What are the reasons you haven't used any of the VA education or training benefits? *Mark all that apply.*

- Not aware of VA education or training benefits
- Don't believe I'm entitled to or eligible for education or training benefits
- Plan on using after I leave active duty service
- Using Tuition Assistance (TA) instead
- Too busy to use the benefit
- Chose not to contribute to the Montgomery GI Bill
- Don't need any additional education or training
- Other → *Please specify below*

### Section E Life Insurance

E1. Do you have Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)?

- Yes
- No

E2. Are you aware that you can convert your SGLI to Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) after you are discharged from the service?

- Yes
- No

E3. Other than SGLI, do you have life insurance coverage through any other organization?

- Yes
- No

### Section F Home Loans

F1. What would you say your current living arrangement is?

- Live in military housing
- Rent my home
- Own my home—with an outstanding mortgage
- Own my home—no mortgage balance
- Occupy dwelling with no payment of cash rent
- Other

F2. Have you ever obtained a home loan to purchase a home, refinance a home loan or make home improvements?

- Yes
- No → **Go to Section G**

F2a. When obtaining financing for your loan, did your lender discuss VA's home loan guaranty program with you as a possible option?

- Yes
- No
- Don't remember

F3. Are you aware that VA has a home loan guaranty program for eligible servicemembers?

- Yes
- No

*Section G appears on the next page.*

- F4. Have you ever used the VA home loan guaranty program?
- Yes, currently have VA home loan
  - Yes, not currently, but have had VA home loan in the past
  - No, never have had VA home loan → **Go to Question F7**

- F5. How long ago did you obtain your most recent home loan (VA or other)?
- Within last 5 years
  - 6-10 years ago
  - 11-20 years ago
  - More than 20 years ago

- F6. What is the **most important reason** you chose to get a VA home loan?
- VA home loan program is offered only to U.S. military and Veterans
  - No down payment required
  - Convenience
  - No mortgage insurance required
  - Loan more likely to be approved
  - VA's assistance to avoid foreclosure
  - Previous experience with the VA home loan program

**QUESTION F6 SKIPS TO SECTION G ON THE NEXT PAGE →**

- F7. If you have not used the VA home loan program, what was the main reason you did not?
- A conventional FHA mortgage was easier or less expensive for me to obtain
  - I applied for a VA home loan, but did not qualify
  - I did not apply because I did not think that I would qualify
  - I thought that the process for obtaining a VA home loan would take too long
  - My lender and/or realtor discouraged the use of the VA program
  - The VA funding fee was too high
  - I didn't know about the program
  - Other → **Please specify below**

## Section G Burial Benefits

- G1. How satisfied are you with your ability to get accurate information about your burial benefits?
- Does not apply, I have not tried to get information
  - Very satisfied
  - Satisfied
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  - Dissatisfied
  - Very dissatisfied
- G2. Have you ever visited a VA National cemetery or shrine honoring Veterans?
- Yes
  - No

Question F7 appears in the next column.

G3. How important to you are the following factors to maintaining VA National cemeteries as shrines that honor Veterans?

	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know
a. Maintenance of the cemetery grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Upkeep of headstones, markers, and wall covers for cremated remains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Maintenance of other landscape features	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Appearance of committal shelters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Appearance of individual gravesites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Maintenance of cemetery buildings and roads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Cemetery's front gate and entrance area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Availability of parking and/or restrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Public ceremonies and events that honor Veterans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Presentation of military funeral honors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Other → <b>Please specify below</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

G4. Please indicate if you have heard about the following burial benefits before filling out this survey.

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Burial at a VA National or State Veterans cemetery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Headstone and burial markers provided by VA at private cemeteries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Presidential Memorial Certificates for next of kin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Cash plot allowance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Cash burial allowance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Military Funeral Honors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Receiving a U.S. Flag	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section H Burial Plans

H1. What type of burial do you think you'll have?

- In-ground, casket burial
- Cremation, in-ground burial
- Cremation columbarium (a vault for cremated remains)
- Mausoleum (i.e. tomb within a monument or building)
- Something else
- Don't know

H2. Do you plan to be buried in a VA National or State Veterans cemetery?

- Yes
- No → **Go to Question H3**
- Don't know

H2a. What are your reasons for planning to be buried in a VA National or State Veterans Cemetery? **Mark all that apply.**

- No cost
- Friends or family buried there
- Quality of services
- The honor of burial in a VA National shrine
- My connection to the military/past service to country
- Other → **Please specify below**

- Don't Know

**QUESTION H2a SKIPS TO QUESTION H5 ON THE NEXT PAGE →**

Question H3 appears on the next page.



H3. What would you say are your main reasons for not planning to be buried in a VA National or State Veterans cemetery? **Mark all that apply.**

- Don't know eligibility criteria
- Quality of services
- Don't know how to make arrangements with VA
- Made other arrangements
- VA services don't accommodate religious preferences
- Veterans cemetery too far away (distance)
- Travel time to Veterans cemetery too long
- Appearance of cemetery doesn't meet my expectations
- Wanted location close to other family members
- Wanted services that weren't available at Veterans cemetery
- Too difficult to make arrangements with VA
- Unable to make advance arrangements with VA
- Other → **Please specify below**

Don't Know

H4. If you choose to be buried in a private cemetery, do you think you'll have your burial place marked by a headstone or marker provided by VA (at no cost to you)?

- Yes → **Go to Question H5**
- No
- Don't know → **Go to Question H5**



Question H5 appears in the next column.

H4a. What are the main reasons you don't plan to use a headstone or marker provided by VA? **Mark all that apply.**

- Don't know about headstones and markers for Veterans
- Made other arrangements
- Wants headstone similar to other family members
- Don't like VA headstones and markers
- Other → **Please specify below**

Don't know

H5. For each of the burial options listed below, please tell us if you consider the option preferable, acceptable, or unacceptable.

Preferable = Your first choice (choose one)

Acceptable = Not your first choice, but would be OK

Unacceptable = You would never choose this type of burial

	Preferable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
a. Casket burial, in-ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Casket burial, in a mausoleum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Cremation, ashes buried in-ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Cremation, ashes placed in a columbarium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Cremation, ashes scattered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Cremation, ashes kept by my family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section I Internet Use

11. Do you use the Internet, at least occasionally?
- Yes
- No → **Go to Question I4**
12. How often do you access the Internet or World Wide Web?
- At least once a day
- At least once a week but not every day
- At least once a month but less than once a week
- At least once a year but less than once a month
- Less than once a year
13. Where do you go on-line to use the Internet?  
*Mark all that apply.*
- Home
- Work
- School
- Public library
- Community center
- Someone else's house
- Some other place
14. Do you send or receive emails, at least occasionally?
- Yes
- No → **Go to Question I6**
15. Where do you go on-line to send or receive emails? *Mark all that apply.*
- Home
- Work
- School
- Public library
- Community center
- Someone else's house
- Some other place

Question I6 appears in the next column.

16. How willing are you to use the Internet for the following activities?

	Very willing	Somewhat willing	Neither willing nor unwilling	Somewhat unwilling	Very unwilling
a. Obtaining news and information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Carrying out research on services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Purchasing goods or services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Responding to polls or surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Obtain information about VA benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Apply for VA benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Would you like to receive VA information through the Internet or the World Wide Web?

- Yes
- No

18. Have you ever accessed a website for transition assistance, employment assistance, or to obtain information on benefits and services available to Veterans and/or transitioning servicemembers?

- Yes
- No

## Section J Demographics

- J1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

- J2. What is your year of birth?

Year

J3. Please indicate the number of dependent children you have.

**Number of minor children (age 17 and younger)**

**Number of adult children attending High School and/or College (age 18-22)**

J4. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- Less than high school
- High school diploma / GED
- Some college credit, but less than one year of college credit
- One or more years of college credit, no degree
- Associate's degree (for example, AA, AS)
- Bachelor's degree (for example, BA, BS)
- Master's degree (for example, MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)
- Professional degree beyond a bachelor's degree (for example, MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)
- Doctorate degree (for example, PhD, EdD)

J5. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin **For example: Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on → Please specify below**

J6. What is your race? **Mark all that apply.**

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian Indian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Other Asian (for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on)
- Native Hawaiian
- Guamanian or Chamorro
- Samoan
- Other Pacific Islander (for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on)

J7. What is your current marital status?

- Now married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Never married

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**Thank you for your participation  
in this very important survey.**

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*If found please return to:*

Westat  
1600 Research Blvd, RA 1136  
Rockville, MD 20850