

Rural America and the South Have the Highest Percent of Veterans with Service-Related Disabilities

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As we remember those who have sacrificed this Veteran's Day, we take a special look at the population of veterans with a service-related disability by analyzing newly released data from the 2008 American Community Survey. This is the first time such service-related disability data are available. Our results show that disabled veterans are more concentrated in the South and rural places. This is largely because veterans represent a higher percentage of the total population in these places, although there are also some differences in the rate of disability among veterans. Rural places and the South may be especially in need of facilities to aid disabled veterans. In addition, there is a compound challenge in rural America, where the proportion of disabled veterans is high, and transportation over long distances is an obstacle to obtaining services.

Data

This analysis is based upon U.S. Census Bureau estimates from the 2008 American Community Survey released on September 29, 2009. For more details or information, please refer to the U.S. Census American Community Survey.¹ The table was produced by aggregating information from detailed tables available on American FactFinder (http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en). These estimates are based on survey data, thus caution must be used in comparing across years or places. If the confidence intervals overlap, differences are not

Key Findings

- An estimated 1.78 percent of southern adults are veterans with a service-related disability. This is significantly higher than in any other region. Rates for the South are significantly higher than in any other region in both the suburbs and central cities.
- Other regional differences are also significant. The proportion of the adult population with a service-related disability in the northeast is lowest, followed by the Midwest and West.
- Rural rates are highest in the west, where an estimated 2 out of every 100 adults is a veteran with a service-related disability.
- In the Northeast, Midwest, and West, disabled veterans compose the highest percent of the population in rural places, followed by the suburbs and then central cities. In the South, there are no significant differences by place.

Table 1. Disabled Veterans by Place Size¹ in 2008

2008 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

	TOTAL				RURAL				SUBURBAN				CENTRAL CITY			
	Number of Veterans with Service-Related Disability		Percent of Total Population that are Veterans with Service-Related Disability		Number of Veterans with Service-Related Disability		Percent of Total Population that are Veterans with Service-Related Disability		Number of Veterans with Service-Related Disability		Percent of Total Population that are Veterans with Service-Related Disability		Number of Veterans with Service-Related Disability		Percent of Total Population that are Veterans with Service-Related Disability	
			95% Confidence Interval				95% Confidence Interval				95% Confidence Interval				95% Confidence Interval	
	Estimate	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Estimate	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Estimate	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Estimate	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
United States	3375565	1.47	1.45%	1.48%	666185	1.73	1.70%	1.77%	1738639	1.48	1.46%	1.51%	970741	1.30	1.28%	1.33%
Northeast	452431	1.06	1.03%	1.09%	66171	1.57	1.48%	1.66%	289402	1.14	1.10%	1.17%	96858	0.75	0.71%	0.80%
Midwest	651463	1.29	1.26%	1.32%	195556	1.64	1.59%	1.69%	299984	1.23	1.19%	1.27%	155923	1.10	1.06%	1.14%
South	1499751	1.78	1.75%	1.81%	294791	1.74	1.68%	1.80%	767933	1.81	1.77%	1.85%	437027	1.76	1.71%	1.81%
West	771920	1.46	1.43%	1.49%	109667	2.05	1.94%	2.15%	381320	1.54	1.49%	1.58%	280933	1.24	1.19%	1.28%

¹Levels of urbanization are defined as follows: Rural consists of American Community Survey geographic components “not in metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area” and “in micropolitan statistical area”; suburban includes “in metropolitan statistical area- not in principal city,” and central city includes “in metropolitan statistical area-in principal city.”

²Estimates are based on 2008 American Community Survey.

Source: American Community Survey

statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). For ease of presentation, we show confidence intervals for the percent of the population that are veterans with service-related disabilities.² Note that analyses are based on current place of residence and thus will not match exactly where veterans lived prior to military service. For example, some disabled veterans currently residing in rural places may have retired to that place after a life spent in a suburb or central city.

ENDNOTES

1. http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTGeoSearchByListServlet?ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&_lang=en&_ts=268570514748
2. To calculate the confidence intervals for the estimates, refer to the American Factfinder tool and the Accuracy of the Data documentation (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Accuracy/Accuracy1.htm>).

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