Measuring Veteran well-being

Well-being is measured across seven domains using 21 high level indicators.

DOMAIN AND DEFINITION	INDICATORS	
HEALTH A state of physical, mental, social and spiritual functioning, broader than the absence of disease	• Self-rated health • Self-rated mental health	• Activity limitation • Needs assistance with daily activities
PURPOSE The sense of meaning attained by participating in fulfilling activities, such as employment	• Employment rate • Satisfaction with life	• Satisfaction with main activity
FINANCES Household income and financial security	• Rate of low income • Satisfaction with finances	
SOCIAL INTEGRATION Involvement in mutually supportive relationships (friends, family and community)	• Sense of belonging • Social support scale	• Adjustment to post-service life
LIFE SKILLS How personal health practices, coping skills and education—for example—enable management of life and contribute to resilience	• Education Level • Daily Smoking • Heavy Drinking	• Obesity • Mastery
HOUSING AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT Includes the built environment (housing), and the natural environment (water and air quality)	• Rate of Veterans among Canadian homeless	
CULTURE AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT The dominant values, beliefs and attitudes of society that impact one's well-being	• Canadians' attitudes towards Veterans • Employers' attitudes towards Veterans • Branch, rank and sex at release	

Veterans Affairs Canada   Anciens Combattants Canada

Canada

Monitoring and measuring well-being

Building on the established domains of Veteran well-being, a comprehensive framework was developed to provide a systematic approach for monitoring and measuring the well-being of Canadian Veterans. Initial analysis showed that the well-being of Regular Force Veterans differed in three categories:

1. Rank and branch at time of release
2. Age group at time of survey
3. Sex

Rank and branch at release

Officers had better well-being in most domains. The biggest differences were between officers and junior non-commissioned members.

Compared to other branches, Army Veterans had more difficult adjustments to post-service life and were less likely to have graduated post-secondary school with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Age at time of survey

The youngest Veterans, under the age of 35, had:

- Better self-rated health
- Lower rates of activity limitation
- Lower rates of needing assistance with daily living

The oldest Veterans, age 55 and over, had:

- Better self-rated mental health
- Better satisfaction with finances
- Stronger sense of community belonging
- Easier adjustment to post-service life
- Lower rates of heavy drinking

Sex

Female Veterans were more likely to have graduated post-secondary school with a bachelor's degree or higher, and had lower rates of both heavy drinking and obesity.

Male Veterans were more likely to be in the workforce and employed, and were less likely to need help with activities of daily living.

Compared to Canadians

Veterans had comparable well-being to Canadians in some indicators. Veterans differed from Canadians in having:

- Poorer health
- Lower employment rates
- Lower satisfaction with life
- Weaker sense of community belonging
- Lower education levels
- Higher rates of heavy drinking
- Higher obesity rates
- Lower smoking rates
- Lower rates of low income

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact VAC.research-recherche.ACC@Canada.ca for the full research report.

This publication is available in alternate formats on request.

Find more resources regarding VAC's health programs and services on veterans.gc.ca.

Monitoring the Well-being of Veterans: A Veteran Well-being Surveillance Framework. Charlottetown (PE): Veterans Affairs Canada, Strategic Policy Unit, August 2017. www.publications.gc.ca/pub?id=9.849051&sl=0

Pound, T. Measuring Veteran Well-Being. Charlottetown PE: Research Directorate, Veterans Affairs Canada. Research Directorate Data Report. 2019.