

# NEEDS AND OBSTACLES OF VETERANS IN EMPLOYMENT



UKRAINIAN  
**VETERANS**  
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June – July 2023

Sociological research



MINISTRY  
OF VETERANS  
AFFAIRS  
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WORK.ua

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# OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION



Today, the issue of providing for the needs of veterans in Ukraine is taking on new dimensions and, accordingly, exposes critical topics hitherto invisible to society and the state. The full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, provoked the prioritization of the needs of the combatants in favor of meeting the needs of those mobilized under martial law. During the hostilities and with the return of the first soldiers demobilized for health-related reasons, the experience of providing for the needs of veterans was actualized in all spheres of society's life. Taking into account the impact of the state of war on the economy of Ukraine – the rapid growth of inflation, the outflow of business, investments, and human resources from Ukraine – the state's ability to financially support veterans in the conditions of an unfinished war has become significantly limited.

Inflation in Ukraine in 2022 was 26.6%<sup>1</sup>, for comparison – in 2021, core inflation increased to 7.9% per year (from 4.5% per year in 2020)<sup>2</sup>. According to the estimates of the National Bank, during the war, the economy of Ukraine loses 50% of its "unproduced" GDP. That is, every week "costs" the national economy more than UAH 50 billion, not including losses from destruction. The IMF estimates Ukraine's losses due to the military invasion of the Russian invaders at 35 percent of GDP<sup>3</sup>.

As of January 2023, according to the assessment of the Kyiv School of Economics, at least 109 large and medium-sized enterprises of various forms of ownership have suffered direct losses, and the total amount of losses is estimated at 13 billion dollars. According to experts, 19 (17%) of the large and medium-sized private and state enterprises were completely destroyed, and another 90 (83%) were partially damaged. As of the beginning of November 2022, 12.4% of small and 8% of micro-enterprises have completely ceased their activities; almost stopped work – 24.6% and 22.5%; worked partially – 33.2% and 31.9% of enterprises, respectively<sup>4</sup>.

## Situation on the labor market

During the full-scale war, unfavorable conditions for the employment of veterans developed directly in the labor market of Ukraine. According to Work.ua, before the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine, there were more than 100,000 vacancies on the platform. Since the beginning of the invasion, the number of vacancies has decreased more than 10 times. A third of businesses completely or almost completely stopped their work. Competition among job seekers has increased more than fivefold. Starting in April 2022, the labor market started a gradual recovery and reached its peak in October 2022 with 56,719 vacancies, which was more than 50% of the pre-war level. A new challenge was massive rocket attacks, power shortages and communication disruptions, which had a direct impact on business in Ukraine. Having adapted to new changes, the Ukrainian labor market entered the new year 2023 with record indicators. In May 2023, the

<sup>1</sup> Inflation in Ukraine in 2022 was 26.6% - State Statistics [Online resource] // Economic truth - 2023 - Access mode: <https://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2023/01/10/695830>

<sup>2</sup> In December 2021 inflation slowed to 10.0% in annual terms [Online resource] // National Bank of Ukraine - 2021 - Access mode: [https://bank.gov.ua/admin\\_uploads/article/CPI\\_2021-12.pdf?v=4](https://bank.gov.ua/admin_uploads/article/CPI_2021-12.pdf?v=4)

<sup>3</sup> Business in the conditions of war: who suffered the greatest losses and how enterprises are restored [Online resource] // Economic Truth – 2022 – Access mode: <https://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2022/03/23/684549/>

<sup>4</sup> Unemployment in Ukraine during the full-scale war [Online resource] // National Institute of Strategic Studies – 2023 – Access mode: <https://niss.gov.ua/news/ko-mentari-ekspertiv/bezrobittya-v-ukrayini-v-period-povnomasshtabnoyi-viyny>

number of job offers on Work.ua crossed the mark of 90,000 vacancies, which was 90% of the pre-war level. As for the competition of searchers, it has already reached the pre-war level.

Employment platforms have estimated that the average salary in Ukraine is about UAH 15,000, but it can vary significantly by city and region. According to Work.ua, the highest average salary level is in Kyiv (18 thousand UAH) and Lviv (16 thousand UAH), the lowest is in Kryvyi Rih, Sumy and Chernihiv (12.5 thousand UAH). Excluding the IT sector, the highest levels of average salary are in real estate, transport, sales and agriculture. The lowest average salary levels are in insurance, retail trade and security. In December 2022, the highest salaries, excluding IT and managerial positions, were offered by positions: international driver – UAH 40,000, car painter – UAH 35,000, realtor – UAH 30,000, diesel engineer – UAH 29,000<sup>5</sup>.

The top five most in-demand specialists remained unchanged throughout the year, and in December 2022 it looked like this:

- sales consultant – 4,273 vacancies with an average salary of UAH 12,000;
- sales manager – 3,725 vacancies, UAH 20,000 – average salary;
- accountant – 2,042 vacancies, UAH 15,000 – average salary;
- driver – 1,859 vacancies, UAH 22,000 – average salary;
- cook – 1,596 vacancies, UAH 14,000 – average salary.

Top 5 categories with the largest number of vacancies in December 2022:

- "Service sphere" – 9,208 vacancies;
- "Vocational specialties, production" - 8,376;
- "Sale, purchase" - 7,746;
- "Retail trade" - 6,120;
- "Administration, middle management" - 4,868.

## Unemployment

The war led to an increase in the number of unemployed and the expansion of the shadow labor market in Ukraine. Since the start of the full-scale war, 1,320,000 (28% of the total) workers in medium, small and micro businesses have been laid off, 18% have been furloughed, and 22% have had their wages reduced. According to the estimates of the Ministry of Economy, at the beginning of 2023, the number of unemployed was 2.6 million people, and according to the estimates of the NBU, about 4.2–4.8 million people. The situation remains understudied due to the developed shadow labor market in Ukraine. During the war, no one keeps records of those Ukrainians who work unofficially. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, by February 24, 2022, the number of unofficially employed people amounted to 3 million people, of which 1.7 million are unregistered entrepreneurs. According to the assumptions of the Ministry of Economy, during the war, the number of unofficially employed people could increase<sup>6</sup>.

As of January 1, 2023, 186,500 people were registered in the State Employment Center of Ukraine. During this period, the number of unemployed women increased significantly. Now their share among all those registered in the State Employment Center is almost 70%<sup>7</sup>. At the same time, the number of unemployed

<sup>5</sup> Labor market-2023: top-5 most in-demand and best-paid specialists [Online resource] // Ministry of Finance of Ukraine - 2023 - Access mode: <https://minfin.com.ua/ua/2023/01/10/98756072/>

<sup>6</sup> Unemployment in Ukraine during the full-scale war [Online resource] // National Institute of Strategic Studies - 2023 - Access mode: <https://niss.gov.ua/news/ko-mentari-ekspertiv/bezrobittya-v-ukrayini-v-period-povnomashtabnoyi-viyny>

<sup>7</sup> Labor market 2023: where are the highest salaries now and what specialists are in demand [Online resource] // Economic Truth – 2023 – Access mode: <https://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2023/01/25/696322/index.asp>

combatants who received the services of the State Employment Service for the period from March 1, 2022 to March 30, 2023 was 8,911, of which 1,931 were registered as unemployed; employed – 2,362; passed vocational training – 118.

### Previous surveys of employment of veterans

Taking into account the above-described situation in the labor market and the economy of Ukraine, ensuring the need for financial self-sufficiency and independence of veterans largely rests on the shoulders of the veterans themselves, their families and civil society.

Employing veterans, as one of the direct ways to ensure the well-being and recovery of veterans, in a strategic sense, becomes on the same level as the issue of medical care, physical and psychological rehabilitation.

If we pay attention to previous researches on the topic of employment needs of veterans have been covered during the entire period of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, it can be seen that the mentioned problem has not attracted much attention so far, and research on this topic was carried out on a case-by-case basis, at the initiative and with the assistance of interested organizations of public sector and international partners. At the same time, the results of these few studies show unfavorable trends for the employment of veterans.

For example, according to a study conducted within the framework of the IREX Veterans Reintegration Program, 32% of veterans who had to find work after military service felt that employers were reluctant to hire them because of their status. According to the results of the study "Life after the conflict" conducted in 2019, 24% of ex-combatants stated that they feel discrimination due to their veteran status when looking for a job, and 80% of veterans do not indicate their military experience on their resumes (according to the "Free People Employment Centre").

Despite the fact that civil society organizations actively produce measures to promote the employment of veterans in civilian life, initiatives aimed at changing the attitude towards veterans in the labor market have yet to be seen<sup>8</sup>.

In 2021, the career portal Happy Monday and the NGO "Professionals of the Future" conducted a survey among veterans of the ATO/JFO to find out what problems and prejudices they face from employers. The survey was conducted between 3 and 13 of December, 2021 and covered 77 veterans of the ATO/JFO, and in-depth interviews were conducted with two ex-combatants. According to the results of the study, the majority of interviewed veterans were officially employed before serving in the ATO/JFO zone, and a third worked unofficially or were engaged in entrepreneurial activities. After returning from the combat zone, the majority of veterans (55%) tried to return to their previous place of work, the rest (45%) decided not to do this. Ultimately, 62% of respondents did not return to their old job.

Among the main reasons:

- chose another option for career development;
- received injuries during the service that do not allow working in the previous format;
- were employed unofficially, and employers refused to renew them in their positions.

Also, the survey revealed a number of personal obstacles that prevented veterans of the ATO/OOS from effectively looking for a new job, in particular, such experiences as:

- the feeling that military experience is irrelevant to a civilian career and is not valued by employers;
- doubts about their own qualifications and the opinion that they have lost professional skills during their service;
- the assumption that at the new place of work, they will not be able to get along with colleagues who were not at the front and do not know what war is.

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<sup>8</sup> There are jobs for veterans! Project on the employment of veterans of the ATO/JFO – Study of advantages, obstacles and precautions in the employment of veterans of the ATO/JFO [Online resource] // Happy Monday – 2021 – Access mode: <https://happy monday.ua/specproject/projekt-pro-pratsevlashtuvannya-veteraniv-ato-oos>



An external barrier that came directly from employers (according to combatants) was the perception that ex-combatants have psychological problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and therefore cannot work effectively and interact with colleagues. This biased attitude was observed by a third of the veterans interviewed in the study<sup>9</sup>.

## Employment benefits for veterans

Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine "On the status of war veterans, guarantees of their social protection" defines a list of benefits for participants in hostilities (combatants).

Among them are benefits in the field of employment and employment:

- payment of temporary disability benefits in the amount of 100 percent of the average salary, regardless of length of service;
- use of regular annual leave at a time convenient for them, as well as receiving additional leave with salary for a period of 14 calendar days per year;
- the preferential right to stay at work in the event of a reduction in the number or staff of employees in connection with changes in the organization of production and work and to employment in the event of liquidation of an enterprise, institution, or organization.

Article 13 of the Law of Ukraine "On the status of war veterans, guarantees of their social protection" provides a list of benefits for persons with disabilities due to war and persons equated with persons with disabilities due to war.

Among them are benefits in the field of employment and employment:

- the preferential right to remain at work in the event of a reduction in the number or staff of employees in connection with changes in the organization of production and work and to employment in the event of the liquidation of enterprises, institutions, organizations;
- payment of temporary disability benefits to working persons with disabilities as a result of the war in the amount of 100 percent of the average salary, regardless of length of service;
- payment of benefits to working persons with disabilities for temporary incapacity for work for up to 4 months in a row or up to 5 months during a calendar year, as well as state social insurance benefits for the entire period of stay in the sanatorium, taking into account travel there and back in the event that the annual allowance for treatment and additional vacations are insufficient;
- use of regular annual leave at a time convenient for them, as well as receiving additional leave with salary for a period of 14 calendar days per year;
- preferential employment by specialty in accordance with the conclusions of the medical and social expertise<sup>10</sup>.

Vouchers are available for veterans to maintain competitiveness in the labor market, the provision of which is coordinated by the State Employment Center. By using such vouchers, veterans get the opportunity to get retraining for a vocational profession, prepare for a master's degree based on a bachelor's or master's degree obtained in another specialty, and prepare for the next level of education (except for the third (educational-scientific/educational-creative) level of higher education), specialization and advanced training in educational institutions or at the employer.

<sup>9</sup> 62% of ATO/JFO veterans do not return to their previous place of work – Study of advantages, obstacles and precautions in the employment of ATO/JFO veterans [Online resource] // Happy Monday – 2021 – Access mode: <https://happy monday.ua/opytuvannya-veteraniv-ato-oos>

<sup>10</sup> Law of Ukraine "On the status of war veterans, guarantees of their social protection" [Online resource] // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. – 2023. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3551-12#Text>

## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of February 10, 2023 No. 124<sup>11</sup> "On Approval of the Procedure for Providing Compensation to Employers for Employment of Registered Unemployed" determines the procedure for providing such compensation to employers who have employed, on the referral of the Employment Center, combatants who have the status of registered unemployed.

Providing for the needs of combatants and persons with disabilities as a result of the war has become a priority and, taking into account external economic factors (inflation growth up to 26.6% and direct losses suffered by enterprises, the unemployment rate), martial law and the preferential nature of the state veteran policy, we can say that the capabilities of the state are extremely limited.

However, employment of veterans becomes one of the main tasks of the veteran policy and its provision has a strategic impact on the further level of the quality of life of veterans. Due to certain obstacles, such as being injured during military service, veterans' personal feeling that military experience is irrelevant to a civilian career and not valued by employers, and employers' concerns about their psycho-emotional state, 62% of respondents did not return to their old job. Unfortunately, the situational nature of research and their number in recent years in this area does not allow us to be guided by current data and systematically monitor trends.

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<sup>11</sup> Resolution dated February 10, 2023 No. 124 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2023. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/124-2023-%DO%BF#Text>



# INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



## Veterans Employment Experiences in the United States: An Analytical Reference

For the analysis of international experience, we have chosen as an example the veteran policy of the United States of America, a strategic partner of Ukraine. The USA is one of the most developed democratic countries with a strong defense capability of the army.

In the annual ranking of the world's strongest armies conducted by Global Firepower-2023, the United States took first place. The rating was based on about 60 factors, including the number of armed forces, the level of technical equipment, financing and the use of modern technologies.

Thus, the total number of US military personnel is 1,832,000, of which 1,390,000 are active military personnel. And the defense budget amounted to 761 billion dollars<sup>12</sup>. These and other data about the state are important in the context of further analysis of its veteran policy, because they create an idea of the role of the Armed Forces in the state and have an impact on the formation of the image of military personnel and veterans in public opinion.

Analyzing the actual experience of the USA in ensuring the employment needs of veterans, it is worth considering that we will be talking about veterans of working age. Therefore, the context of their acquisition of this status is equally important, which may differ depending on the country and its legislation.

According to US law, a veteran is any person who served with honor in any of the five branches of the US Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard)<sup>13</sup>.

The status of a veteran is not affected by where a person served, for how long, or whether he participated in active combat operations. Members of the National Guard or reservists are considered veterans only if they were deployed by federal order<sup>14</sup>. In US public discourse, considerable attention is paid to the lives of veterans, and their socioeconomic status is sometimes viewed in conjunction with a high cultural respect for the military as an institution and a belief in US military superiority.

Compared to veteran status in Ukraine, not all US veterans have combat experience. Instead, over the past quarter century, many US veterans have gained such experience during their service in the US global fight against terrorism and at the expense of international military operations.

Participation in hostilities outside the country had an unconditional impact both on the soldiers themselves - their skills, physical and psycho-emotional state, and on American society as a whole. In addition, the American veteran community is not monolithic and unified, rather, it is divided into separate communities based on the experience of participating in various military operations.

<sup>12</sup> 2023 Military Strength Ranking – ANNUAL RANKING [Online resource] // GlobalFirepower (GFP) – 2023. – Access mode: <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>

<sup>13</sup> Determining Veteran Status [Online resource] // US. Department of Veterans Affairs. – 2019. – Access mode: <https://www.va.gov/OSDBU/docs/Determining-Veteran-Status.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> The same reference

## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

Participation in hostilities outside the country had an unconditional impact both on the soldiers themselves - their skills, physical and psycho-emotional state, and on American society as a whole. In addition, the American veteran community is not monolithic and unified, rather, It is divided into separate communities based on the experience of participating in various military operations.

In addition to the Vietnam War, in which the vast majority of older American veterans have experience, many older U.S. veterans have combat experience in wars such as:

**1) Gulf War 1990–1991.** Also known as Operation Desert Storm or the First Gulf War. More than 2.2 million American servicemen served at the time, with about 697,000 participating in the war, 299 of whom died. Most of the veterans of that era are still alive<sup>15</sup>.

**2) War on terror (since 2001).** Since the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, in the first decade of the war on terrorism alone, 2,333,972 US military personnel have been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, or both as of August 30, 2011. Of them, 1,353,627 people resigned from the military service. According to the US Armed Forces Personnel Data Center, nearly half, or 977,542, of those who served in Iraq or Afghanistan were deployed there more than once. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, 1,286 service members have received amputations as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result, as of 2011, 7% of the US population were veterans<sup>16</sup>.

In 2022, 18.4 million US men and women were veterans, representing about 7% of the civilian population age 18 and older. Among all veterans, about every tenth was a woman. There are far more male war veterans than non-veterans, and they also tend to be older.

In part, this reflects the characteristics of veterans who served in World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam, all of whom are now 65 and older. Veterans who served in these wartime periods accounted for about a third (6.2 million) of the total number of veterans in 2022. 44% of veterans (8.1 million) served during the First Gulf War or the Second Gulf War (Iraq, Afghanistan)<sup>17</sup>.

In 2022, there were 4.9 million US veterans who served during the Second Persian Gulf War (September 2001 to present). 18% of these veterans were women, compared to approximately 4% of female veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam, demonstrating how the role of women in the U.S. military has grown over the past half century. In August 2022, 42% of the Second Gulf War veterans reported serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, or both. The unemployment rate among these veterans was 2.3 percent<sup>18</sup>.

In contrast, the overall unemployment rate for male veterans of the Second Gulf War, at 3.1%, was lower than the unemployment rate for male non-veterans, at 3.7% in 2022. The overall unemployment rate among female veterans of the Second Gulf War, at 2.9 percent, was not statistically different from the unemployment rate among non-veteran women (3.5 percent) in 2022<sup>19</sup>.

These data indicate that experience and veteran status in the United States do not distinguish them among the entire working population and, accordingly, mass unemployment correlated with veteran status is not observed, neither among women nor among men.

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<sup>15</sup> Series highlights Desert Storm Veterans for 30th anniversary [Online resource] // An official web-site of the United States government. – 2020. – Access mode:

<https://news.va.gov/75651/series-highlights-desert-storm-veterans-30th-anniversary/>

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Veterans: By the Numbers [Online resource] // ABCnews. – 2011. – Access mode:

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/us-veterans-numbers/story?id=14928136>

<sup>17</sup> Employment Situation of Veterans – 2022 [Online resource] // Bureau of Labor Statistics U.S. Department of Labor – 2023. – Access mode: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/vet.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> The same resource

<sup>19</sup> The same resource

**Notably, employed male veterans of the Second Gulf War were more likely to be employed in managerial, professional, and related occupations than employed male non-veterans** (43% and 40%, respectively), while these veterans were less likely to occupy sales and office positions than their non-veteran counterparts (12% and 14%, respectively). **Employed female veterans of the Second Gulf War were less likely to work in the service sector than female non-veterans** (13% and 19%, respectively).

We can assume that military experience in the USA correlates with a certain level of competence and contributes to the formation of such skills, according to which veterans have the opportunity to work and develop in their profession, in more comfortable conditions and with an appropriate level of salary. In addition, **working male veterans of the Second Gulf War were more than twice as likely to work in the public sector** in 2022 as their non-veteran counterparts, 26% versus 10%. Employed female Gulf War veterans were also more likely to work in the public sector than female non-veterans, 27% versus 16%. Among the employed, 14% of all veterans of the Second Gulf War worked for the federal government, compared to 2% of non-veterans<sup>20</sup>. Based on these data, it can be concluded that the experience of US veterans proves that the veteran community is inclined to continue service for the benefit of the state in other areas, in particular, in public administration. At the same time, the United States government creates conditions and encourages veterans to work in the public sector, including prioritizing veterans in employment.

Speaking of veterans with disabilities, in August 2022, 4.9 million veterans, or 27% of all U.S. veterans, had a service-connected disability. Veterans with a service-connected disability are assigned a disability group by the US Department of Veterans Affairs or the US Department of Defense. Scores range from 0 to 100 percent, in 10 percentage point increments, depending on the severity of the condition. The unemployment rate among veterans with a service-connected disability was 3.6% in August 2022. Among veterans with a service-connected disability, 23% reported having a disability group less than 30%, while 50% had a disability group of 60% and above.

In August 2022, veterans with a service-connected disability of less than 30% were much more likely to be employed than those with a disability of 60% or greater (52.6% vs. 44.2%). The unemployment rate among veterans with a disability of less than 30% in August 2022 was 7.4%, which is higher than the unemployment rate for veterans with disabilities of 60% and above (2.6%)<sup>21</sup>.

That is, the degree of disability or its severity has a direct impact on the unemployment of veterans with disabilities in the United States.

For comparison with Ukraine, we can talk about the need to establish a correlation between unemployment and the group of disabilities, but today there is no state analysis of such interdependencies. For the Ukrainian context, quotas for people with disabilities in employment are an advantage.

It is worth noting that in the aforementioned unemployment data for disabled veterans, it is interesting to note that the unemployment rate is higher among those with a lower percentage of disability. We can assume that the USA as a state promotes the employment of those veterans with disabilities who are physically less able to do so, or whose disability requires more additional conditions for employment.

At the same time, the personal motivation of veterans with a more severe form of disability cannot be excluded, as can the direct assistance of employers in the employment of persons with disabilities.

<sup>20</sup> Employment Situation of Veterans – 2022 [Online resource] // Bureau of Labor Statistics U.S. Department of Labor – 2023. – Access mode: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/vet.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> The same resource

## Legislative and institutional guarantees of support for veterans in the field of employment in the USA

The US Department of Labor administers federal labor laws to guarantee workers' rights to fair, safe, and healthy working conditions, including minimum hourly wages and overtime pay, protections against employment discrimination, and unemployment insurance.

Employment benefits for US veterans are enshrined in several laws. These laws establish various employment benefits for veterans, including employment preference, protection from discrimination, right to return to work after serving in the military, and require federal contractors to give preference to veterans in employment.

The main legislative acts that declare support for veterans in employment are:

**Veterans' Preference Act, 1944.** This law establishes preferences for veterans in government employment. According to it, veterans have a preference for employment in the federal service.

They may have an advantage in competitive selection for work, receive additional points or preferences in relation to qualification criteria. The law also provides preference in hiring veterans with and without disabilities from competitive lists of potential employees and defines conditions for special non-competitive appointments that allow to hire veterans<sup>22</sup>.

**Veterans Employment Opportunity Act, 1998.** The law provides for giving preference to candidates who can meet the competitive conditions of service if they are considered "applicants for status". Applicants for status are those who "are current or former federal civilian employees who have or have had temporary contracts in competitive service and not exempt service." This law requires federal agencies to publish job opportunities and give preference to veterans when hiring. It provides greater accessibility and transparency regarding job vacancies and protects veterans' rights to equal access to employment opportunities<sup>23</sup>.

**Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994.** This law protects the rights of veterans returning to civilian employment after service. It guarantees them protection against discrimination at work and ensures the right to return to their previous job with all the benefits and rights they had before leaving for service<sup>24</sup>.

**Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act, 1974.** This law applies to federal contracts and requires federal contractors to give preference to veterans in employment. They must take active measures to ensure equal opportunities for veterans in employment and career development<sup>25</sup>.

In partnership with other federal agencies, state and local governments, veterans' organizations, business and community groups, and professional associations, VETS provides services to both employers and veterans.

VETS offers employment and training services through joint working arrangements and provides funds to states through special grant agreements to support two national programs: **the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) Program.**

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<sup>22</sup> Veterans' Preference Act of 1944—still relevant today [Online resource] // The Postal Record. – 2018. – Access mode: <https://www.nalc.org/member-benefits/body/page-19-veterans.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Veterans Employment Opportunity Act of 1998 (VEOA) [Online resource] // United States Office of Personnel Management website. – Access mode: <https://www.usajobs.gov/help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/veterans/veoa/>

<sup>24</sup> Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act [Online resource] // Veterans' Employment and Training Service. – 1944. – Режим доступа до ресурсу: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/programs/userra>

<sup>25</sup> Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act [Online resource] // Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs – Access mode: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ofccp/vevraa>

VETS programs are designed to prepare service members, veterans and their spouses who are leaving the military through training opportunities, accessible grants, and by providing employment resources and expertise to help them build fulfilling careers in civilian life. VETS protects the rights of service members and veterans to civilian employment under certain conditions and recognizes employers for their investment in recruiting, employing and retaining the nation's heroes<sup>26</sup>.

**Transition Assistance Program (TAP).** This program is jointly run by the US Veterans Benefits Administration, the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor, and It aims to provide support to veterans as they transition from military service to civilian life.

TAP provides veterans with information and resources on job search, career planning, training, professional development, and other aspects of successful integration into community life<sup>27</sup>.

These government programs help increase access, support, and prepare veterans for employment. They provide critical infrastructure and services for veterans to successfully enter the workforce and help them develop their civilian careers. In addition, the programs are comprehensive, and several specialized ministries and services are involved in the work, which contributes to the coordination of efforts and effective provision of the needs of veterans in the field of employment.

## Successful local employment support programs for veterans:

**Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER).** LVER conducts active outreach programs with employers, community and veterans' organizations, unions, local counseling, and social services to ensure that veterans are aware of and receive the services they are eligible for. They work with veterans to place them in federally funded job and training programs. They also help veterans develop interviewing and resume writing skills; conduct a productive job search and access job listings through electronic databases, including the America's Job Bank<sup>28</sup>.

**"Troops to Teachers"** in the state of California. This program supports veterans who wish to become teachers after completing their military service. The program provides financial assistance, training, and placement of veterans in schools to begin a new career in education. A bachelor's degree is one of the requirements for militaries to be eligible for the program in California. The program calls on ex-servicemen to be mentors and mentors for young people and to work for the good of society<sup>29</sup>.

**"Texas Operation Welcome Home"** in the state of Texas. The program is designed to better meet the needs of military personnel who are in the transitional phase of service; recently discharged veterans and military spouses in the big state of Texas.

The program aims to help veterans find work, study, and prepare for a civilian career. It provides individual support, career planning, and preparation for the labor market<sup>30</sup>.

These examples demonstrate the variety of veterans assistance programs that exist at the state level in the United States. They support states' efforts to promote successful employment and support veterans in pursuing their career goals after military service.

<sup>26</sup> Veterans' Employment and Training Service [Online resource] // U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR – Access mode: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets>

<sup>27</sup> The same resource

<sup>28</sup> Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) [Online resource] // The Employment Development Department – Access mode: <https://www.calcareers.ca.gov/CalHrPublic/Jobs/JobPostingPrint.aspx?jcid=130047>

<sup>29</sup> Troops to Teachers [Online resource] // USAMilitaryBenefits – Access mode: <https://www.usamilitarybenefits.com/troops-to-teachers-california.html>

<sup>30</sup> Texas Operation Welcome Home [Online resource] – Access mode: <https://texasoperationwelcomehome.portal.texas.gov>

## Support programs in the employment of disabled veterans:

**Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP).** The program is owned by the US Department of Labor and provides specialized employment support to veterans with disabilities. It provides career development advice, job search support, training, and other services aimed at improving their employability. Specialists of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program are disabled veterans themselves. They provide individualized career development services exclusively to veterans and eligible individuals with significant barriers to employment. They also provide a full range of employment services, including comprehensive assessment, individual employment plans, job referrals, referrals to training and support services, as well as CV and interview preparation. DVOP professionals provide a personalized approach that tailors training and employment opportunities for veterans with service-connected disabilities or other significant barriers to employment. As government employees, DVOPs typically work for government employment agencies. Still, they can be found in regional offices, medical or veterans service centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, state or county veterans service offices, and military facilities<sup>31</sup>.

**Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP).** This program provides benefits to disabled veterans, employed by US federal agencies. It provides preferences and protections against discrimination in hiring, increases the availability of jobs, and promotes the employment of veterans with disabilities in the federal service. Most federal government departments and agencies are required to have an affirmative action program for the hiring, employment, and promotion of veterans with disabilities. The law requires agencies to develop annual Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) plans.

Each year, agencies must submit reports on the implementation of the DVAAP. The reports must describe the agency's efforts to promote the maximum employment and promotion of disabled veterans and certain Vietnam and post-Vietnam veterans who qualify for such employment and promotion<sup>32</sup>.

In general, the United States of America has a wide range of government programs, grant competitions, and other tools to support the veteran community in employment. The experience of their implementation has been observed since the middle of the 20th century, is actively supported by the public, and their effectiveness is monitored and improved over time.

In the programs we reviewed, it is possible to trace interdepartmental and intersectoral cooperation, which allows them to work comprehensively on meeting the needs of employment. Important is the fact that, in addition to statewide programs, many states support and develop their own initiatives to support veterans in employment. To a large extent, in the further employment of veterans, the American state continues to emphasize its social mission and involvement in the development of the state and society.

This mission is particularly evident in prioritizing public service employment, advocating to work with children, and helping other veterans adjust to civilian life. Indicators certifying the success of the adaptation of veterans in civilian life are annually measured and weighted in comparison with non-veterans to avoid any form of limitation or discrimination against veterans.

Therefore, based on the US experience, it is first of all important to ensure the ability to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all existing and newly created tools to support veterans on the way to employment. Equally important is the cooperation between various departments - support for US veterans in employment is not limited to the activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor, instead, the Department of Defense and local governments play an active role in various programs. An integral component of the veteran support system is local initiatives, some of which are examples for the whole country. They develop a network and exchange experience.

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<sup>31</sup> Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program [Online resource] // NY Department of Labor – Access mode: <https://dol.ny.gov/services-veterans>

<sup>32</sup> Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program DVAAP [Online resource] // Veteran Employment Services Office – Access mode: [https://www.vaforvets.va.gov/docs/DVAAP\\_FactSheet.pdf](https://www.vaforvets.va.gov/docs/DVAAP_FactSheet.pdf)



# METHODOLOGY



The study "Needs and Obstacles in the Employment of Veterans" is a logical addition to the complex studies "Needs of Veteran 2023" and "Portrait of Veteran 2022", conducted by the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation during the full-scale war.

The study "Needs and Obstacles in the Employment of Veterans" was conducted from May to June 2023 and consisted of an office and empirical part. Based on the results of the cabinet part of the study, the current situation and previous studies on the employment characteristics of war veterans were analyzed.

The cabinet part of the study also includes an analysis of best practices and employment support programs for veterans in the United States of America.

## **The empirical part of the study consists of two parts:**

**1)** a study of the needs and obstacles of employers in the employment of veterans, within which data was collected using two methods: an in-depth interview and an anonymous online survey of employers from the databases of the LobbyX and Work.ua platforms, conducted by the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation;

**2)** an anonymous online survey of the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation among veterans and active services "Needs and Obstacles in the Employment of Veterans".

In-depth interviews of employers. To determine the main needs and obstacles of employers during the war, which can affect the employment of veterans, we decided to use the method of semi-structured in-depth interviews with employers in the following areas: IT, construction, defense industry, auto business and engineering industry (Key Informants Interviews). As a result, 10 in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide with representatives of Ukrainian businesses and enterprises, organizations of various sizes, and dates of establishment. Time frame of the field stage: from June 9 to 15, 2023.

Online survey "Needs and Obstacles in the Employment of Veterans". Audience: 100,000 employers of the Work.ua employment platform. The results are generated using current data. The sample is representative according to the general population.

Sample population: 398 for the Work.ua database. Survey method: online questionnaire by email. The error of representativeness of the study with a confidence probability of 0.95: no more than 3.1%. Dates: June 19 - July 17, 2023.

An anonymous online survey of active services and veterans.

The Ukrainian Veterans Foundation conducted the third anonymous online survey among veterans and active services. The survey ran from June 22 to July 22, 2023, and aimed to collect primary data on needs and obstacles in employment in civilian life.

In our research work, an anonymous online survey has proven to be a reliable tool for collecting primary data and issues. Due to the difficult accessibility of the respondents, the requirements for the sample were not established. The survey is not representative but reflects the general problems of this target audience. 794 respondents took part in the survey.



# RESULTS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYERS



The survey of employers by the method of in-depth interviews is the basic stage of the comprehensive study "Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment", within the framework of which 10 interviews were conducted with representatives of Ukrainian businesses of various scales and spheres of activity.

In particular, representatives of the following fields took part in the interview: construction, IT, auto business, defense industry, food industry, production, and engineering. Interviewing representatives of business companies as one of the direct employers made it possible to collect relevant issues in the sphere of veterans' employment, which is necessary for further research.

In addition, based on the results of in-depth interviews, the employers' vision of the needs and possible obstacles of veterans in employment and integration creates a basis for further dialogue between various representatives of the Ukrainian labor market in order to ensure the needs of veterans in employment, personal and career development in civilian life.

Communication with employers within the framework of interviews also provided them with an opportunity to express their own needs and concerns regarding the employment of veterans and to evaluate the effectiveness of public services. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured method, which provided an opportunity to dive deeper into the experience of employment and work with veterans in the team of each company.

At the same time, interview questions were structured and grouped according to the following blocks: perception of a veteran as an employee and experience of cooperation; support of veterans from employers; support of employers from the state and society for employment of veterans.

## **Perception of the veteran as an employee and the experience of cooperation**

Within this block of interviews, the participants answered, in particular, the following questions: about their own experience of employment and further cooperation with veterans within the team; about the peculiarities of communication and support of the mobilized colleagues after 24.02.22; about the image of a veteran in the context of changes after a full-scale invasion; about the personal qualities and skills of veterans and the influence of the experience of participating in hostilities on the competence of veterans as civilian employees, as well as about the cautions that exist in the Ukrainian labor market regarding the employment of persons with the status of a participant in hostilities.

It is worth noting that the experience of the employers interviewed during the interview differs significantly among themselves. For some of them, the experience of employing veterans, and supporting them in their adaptation and integration into society began in 2015, with the appearance of the first demobilized with the status of combatant, and since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, their internal corporate support system

for veterans has also extended to mobilized colleagues, acquiring new functions and improving. For others, the need of veterans' employment is one of the challenges of Ukraine's post-war recovery because today there is no strategy for responding to this challenge within the company.

The experience of employing veterans from veteran employers deserves special attention, the opinion of one of whom was obtained as part of the conducted interviews. Although the experience of employment and working with veterans was completely different, the veteran employer we interviewed summarized that the experience was mostly positive. Almost all veterans employed by him were people who showed a high level of responsibility. According to him, these were decent people, and their financial motivation was definitely not in the first place. **"Of the importance, this is probably what was very difficult," the interviewed veteran employer noted and added: "Somewhere there was a lack of management experience, because it was difficult to keep a clear line between a veteran as an employee who actually has to perform a certain function in the business, and a veteran as a comrade in arms."**

At the same time, the absolute majority of the interviewees stated that during the selection of candidates, they may not know or guess that some of them have the status of a participant in hostilities (UBD). **"We do not have such a distinction, neither in terms of demographics nor in terms of inclusiveness. In our accounting, we do not single out (employees) as war veterans. We perceive each job seeker first of all according to the profile for which there is a vacancy. And I am sure that there are already veterans employed by us," one of the interview participants noted.**

Speaking about colleagues who are mobilized today, all those surveyed in the interview reported that they keep in touch and support colleagues at work: they contact at least once a week and keep the workplace for mobilized employees.

In the answers to the questions about the generalized image of the veteran, his characteristic features and qualities, various associations regarding age and behavior can be traced. For some of them, this image is predominantly male, about 40 years old. However, summarizing all the interviews, the dominant opinion is that nowadays any ordinary person can be a veteran, and therefore the external image does not have clear features. Describing his own ideas and the image of a veteran, one of the participants of the interview said: **"First of all, apparently, we are talking about a person. Whether male or female does not matter. A person who actually took part in hostilities. Moreover, I am not talking about the fact that this participation must necessarily be in the trenches. There must be various forms of involvement in combat operations, for example, planning, IT development, logistics, where you can trace the cause-and-effect relationship between human activity and the performance of a combat mission."**

On the other hand, when talking about internal traits and qualities, veterans are associated with a heightened sense of justice, a strong civic stance, courage, responsibility, straightforwardness, and scrupulousness.

Discussing the internal personal characteristics of a veteran, a representative of a construction business particularly distinguished himself with his own position: **"I would really like for us to move away from these stereotypes that it must be a morally crippled person, with physical and mental injuries and so on. Yes, such a situation can be, it is so obvious that it will be in many cases, but I think that we need, in fact, to fight for the perception of the veteran's own consciousness as a completely full-fledged, healthy person. Even if there are temporary nuances, they should only be temporary. And that's normal. (...) Even if there are irreversible limitations, for example, of a physical nature, there should still be a return to the fullest possible life."**

Regarding the influence of the experience of participating in combat operations on the competence of veterans as civil workers, one of the interview participants noted: **"We have a category of those who return, almost all of them return due to their health. I'll be honest, in most cases they can no longer work at the jobs they left. Because disability and self-perception do not give that opportunity, and this is probably the most difficult thing."**

## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

Employers who already have experience in employing veterans pay special attention to the fact that during the war and the service of colleagues in the army, changes occur not only at the level of a military person's personality but also in society and the work team in particular. Therefore, the readiness of the team is of great importance in the process of adaptation and integration of the veteran into the civilian work process.

In order to prepare the team to work with veterans and/or with demobilized colleagues, some employers use psychologists for psychoeducation of the team, in particular, regarding the specifics of communication with veterans, regarding topics and issues that should not be raised without the veteran's own initiative. Speaking about communication in the team, one of the interview participants noted: "It is critically unacceptable that the definition of respect be replaced by the concept of some kind of pity or sympathy. That is, respect is not the same as pity. And, in fact, a veteran should treat himself in the same way."

Highlighting the cautions that exist in the Ukrainian labor market regarding the employment of persons with the status of a participant in hostilities, the interviewees spoke to one degree or another about the psycho-emotional state of veterans. Some are cautious that the possible emotional instability of the veteran may affect the effectiveness of his work and communication with him.

For others, their own ignorance/unreadiness can be a caution. **"In fact, it is important to try to perceive the person and the people as objectively as possible. That is, do not idealize and very often do not depreciate them. That is, to understand that a veteran is, as a rule, a highly motivated person. It is mostly a person who is a patriot. Mostly, this is a person with a clear civic position. But the key in all this is the word "mostly",** - noted one of the participants of the interview.

## Support of veterans by employers

In the part of the interview on the topic "Support of veterans by employers" there were questions about the existing measures and programs to support veterans within companies/organizations/enterprises and about changes and measures that are permissible in the future to meet the needs of veterans during employment. In addition, this block of questions discussed: existing internal policies and protocols regarding the adaptation of veterans in the work environment and their effectiveness; additional services that the employer provides or can provide for the veteran, in particular, the practice of adapting the workplace to the needs and capabilities of a person with a disability.

The full-scale invasion of Russia on 02/24/22 increased the support of mobilized colleagues to the agenda as a higher priority task for employers, and for many the needs of veterans in civilian work can be understood through the lens of the needs of future or already demobilized colleagues returning to civilian life. **"At the beginning of the war, there were more volunteers than mobilized persons, and we simply supported them all. We've made a procedure for the purchase of bulletproof vests very quickly. And we support, of course, their decisions, because they will protect us, in particular, personally,"** noted one of the interview participants.

Typically, corporate-wide policies or protocols related to supporting veterans, according to the interviews, are more typical of large-scale industry enterprises and network companies. Instead, representatives of IT companies talk about a human-centric approach to work in general, where providing comfortable working conditions for each employee is one of the key principles of the company/organization.

Therefore, the creation of separate programs or services for veterans, as a generalized category, is considered inappropriate, and an individual approach to the needs of employees is applied regardless of experience and preferential status. The experiences of business representatives interviewed suggest that a situational response to veteran employment challenges is more common than a systematic approach. At the same time, the experience of veterans prompts employers to consider veteran adaptation programs as such.

If we talk about specific measures to support veterans in the civilian work environment, all the interview participants mentioned psychological support, which during the full-scale war became relevant not only for veterans.

Some of the large-scale industrial companies provided a separate staff of psychologists for their employees and involved additional psychotherapeutic and psychiatric diagnostics. Others, responding to a request for psychological support, said that they cooperated with external partners, in particular from the public sector.

Legal consultations are another relevant service for veterans that employers already provide, most often with their own resources. **"We provide legal support because we know that there, at the state level, there are many institutions, there is a bureaucratic scheme where you send a request and you have to wait a few more months to get some kind of certificate, just to have an answer to the question. Lawyers here (at the company) advise and help,"** said a representative of a network company from the food industry in an interview. Other additional services that already exist in the companies of the employers we interviewed, and can contribute to the adaptation of veterans in the working environment, are: medical examination and financing of treatment; massage room in the office for company employees; additional training for persons without experience; additional leave for veterans.

One of the interview participants, a representative of a large business, a company in the food industry, shared her experience of supporting veterans within the company's adaptation program: **"At industrial enterprises, there is an employer's obligation to ensure that people undergo a professional examination, and according to the certification of workers places can determine whether a person can perform such a job in such a workplace. But in our reintegration program, we provided such an extended medical check-up. (...) It is usually carried out in private medical institutions so that it is comfortable and fast. And the medical check-up involves an examination by a psychiatrist, who, in fact, gives us a conclusion. Only after that, when all physiological problems are ruled out, then our warrior moves to the stage where our psychologist communicates with him. That's why the psychologist works, consults, and communicates only after the points related to some potential problems have been ruled out."**

Some of the employers interviewed by us also provide informational support for the team and separately for veterans in the team. **"When our soldier returned, we offer him to connect to our special Telegram channel. This channel has a lot of information that is usually needed by a person who has just returned. It is more of a legal direction, i.e. what benefits do you have, how to get the participant in hostilities status and so on. And there are already our demobilized employees there, and our employee understands that he is not the first, not the only one,"** explained one of the participants in the interview.

An informal but already existing option in the employment of veterans is to give them priority at the selection stage. It is worth noting that the tendency to give preference during the selection to candidates with experience of participation in combat operations can be seen among companies whose activities are dominated by technical and engineering components.

Among other candidates, the representatives of the engineering company, auto business, defense industry, and construction spoke in particular about the permissible priority for veterans. **"It seems to me that construction is the best field of activity for veterans, because even in peacetime, construction is like a small army with its charter, orders, understanding and rules. And always in construction, the best leaders are those who were in the army. They arrange such an order among the builders,"** said a representative of the construction company. Representatives of companies from the above-mentioned industries also talked about greater employment opportunities for people without experience, which could potentially be veterans. For candidates without experience, a separate series of positions and appropriate training is provided. Instead, representatives of IT companies emphasized the importance of "hard" and "soft" skills, which makes a candidate in demand and competitive, regardless of military experience and status. At the same time, for candidates without experience, the IT field currently offers a whole range of training courses and internships in various areas, which, according to the interviewees, can contribute to the employment of veterans. The experience of

a veteran employer was very valuable during interviews with business representatives. From his own experience, he expressed a kind of advice regarding the conscious attitude when employing veterans: **"The only thing that employers need to understand in general is that working with veterans is not some kind of trick. This is an additional resource during the any interactions with the veteran."**

Despite the overwhelming openness of the interviewed employers to the needs of veterans and the understanding of the need for their own contribution to the process of adaptation and recovery of veterans in the working environment, the majority of the interviewed employers are aware of the risks and try not to be overly enthusiastic. As one of the participants of the interview noted, in the process of supporting veterans there were situations that can be characterized as "disservice". **"Actually, there was insufficient demand for veterans, and where it was necessary to stimulate them a little to learn, develop, work on themselves, change, there, due to weaknesses and various forms of PTSD, the wrong type of loyalty was manifested, that is, not the kind which is constructive, and which in fact contributed to the degradation of a person in one way or another,"** explained one of the interviewed employers.

### Support of employers from the state and society for the employment of veterans

In this block of questions to representatives of businesses and enterprises, the wishes of employers regarding support from the state in hiring veterans were revealed. In addition, the degree of loyalty of employers to already existing benefits for veterans in the field of employment, which can affect work processes in the team, and the experience of cooperation with state employment centers were discussed.

The representatives of the Ukrainian labor market who took part in the interview mostly do not provide categorical assessments of the quality and effectiveness of state support for veterans. **"I know that there are state support programs, that there are state programs under which soldiers can go to the Baltics for prosthetics, and there is a whole network of the Ministry of Social Policy and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, and there are all the addresses, where, who can apply. I saw the state of it all. Of course, it needs reconstruction, but the scope is simply incredible. I see that a lot is being done in this direction, but everyone I know, all my acquaintances, find grants or ways and do it (prosthetics/rehabilitation) not in state institutions"**, one of the interview participants shared her personal experience. In general, each participant of the interview in one way or another spoke about the role of the state in ensuring the conditions for adaptation and reintegration of the demobilized - a kind of transition period that includes physical and psychological rehabilitation and a period for certainty and awareness of one's future path.

In turn, any imposed, legally established mandatory employment conditions for veterans are considered impractical and ineffective by employers. As a negative example, many interviewees described the experience of complying with quotas in the employment of people with disabilities, emphasizing the fictitiousness and fraud in this matter by many employers in Ukraine. **"I, as an employer, must understand that if I am obliged to employ ten veterans, what will I gain from this as a business owner? One of the options, it seems to me, can be like this: I employ a veteran, and they reduce, for example, my quota for paying taxes, for some quarter, for six months"**, – this was the opinion expressed by a representative of a network company from the food industry in the interview Ukraine.

Employers see possible support in the employment of veterans from the state not only in direct financial subsidies or tax discounts. And even vice versa – one of the interviewees from the IT business sphere said that he does not see the need for such support from the state.

Instead, some of the interviewed business and entrepreneurship representatives emphasized the need for a large-scale state information campaign about veterans as promising workers whose military experience and skills acquired in the service can be useful in civilian work as well. According to employers, another

direction of business support in the employment of veterans can be the attraction of foreign investments by the state for the development of Ukrainian business and entrepreneurship. As a condition for creating favorable conditions for the employment of veterans, employers consider it necessary to improve the work of state employment centers. The majority of interviewees reported little or ineffective experience of cooperation with employment centers. In particular, the interviewees emphasize the low quality of candidate selection and career guidance services. Among those surveyed business representatives who had the opportunity to talk with candidates who underwent retraining in state employment centers, the prevailing opinion is that work methods and training methods in employment centers are out of date. One of the participants in the interview expressed the opinion that today many job search platforms provide better service and are more popular. Therefore, public employment centers should focus on them and reach the target audience that still finds it difficult to work with information technologies for job search. In particular, these can be older people, residents of rural areas, but who have the necessary practical skills and experience, or vice versa – need retraining. It is possible that employment centers can also pay special attention to the employment needs of veterans and become a sort of conduit between employers and veterans with relevant competencies.

## Conclusions

**Based on the results of in-depth interviews, we can draw the following conclusions:**

**1.** Today, the experience of employment and work with veterans is not a common phenomenon, but at the same time it is becoming widespread and relevant due to the demobilization and return to their workplaces of workers mobilized during a full-scale invasion.

**2.** There is a difference between the experience of employers in the employment of veterans and the attitude to the process of adaptation depending on the field of activity and the presence of mobilized employees. In particular, interviewed representatives from the fields of construction, auto business and engineering are more inclined to implement additional measures to support veterans in the working environment. Employers in these fields are also interested in employing veterans, because they believe that the practical skills they have acquired during their service can make them promising employees.

**3.** Representatives of the IT sector tend to believe that the introduction of separate measures for the adaptation and support of veterans is impractical, because in the companies of this sector a human-centered and individual approach to the needs of each employee prevails, regardless of experience and status.

**4.** Employing experience of veterans from veteran employers deserves special attention, which remains understudied today. The veteran experience of employing siblings and their adaptation in the work environment can be useful for employers without military experience and without experience of communicating with veterans, because it contains practical cases and awareness of risks.

**5.** Speaking about the image of a veteran and associations with him, more and more often employers emphasize that a veteran is primarily a person, regardless of gender, generally young or middle-aged, who participated in combat operations. Among the personal qualities and characteristics that are associated with the image of a veteran, the following prevail: a heightened sense of justice, a pronounced civic position, courage, responsibility, straightforwardness and scrupulousness.

**6.** Among the fears and risks related to the employment of veterans voiced in the interviews, no problem of lack of experience or loss of competences was identified. Employers mainly singled out a possible unstable psycho-emotional state as a risk, which can affect the veteran's productivity, motivation and communication in the work environment.

**7.** Support for veterans, which is currently provided by interviewed employers in the work environment,



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consists of additional psychological support services for the team and demobilized colleagues; legal consultations for mobilized and demobilized workers. A common tendency is also to give priority to candidates with the status of a participant in hostilities in employment. In general, employers are open to meeting the needs of veterans - additional vacations, training, individual work schedules, adaptation of the workplace to the needs of the employee and transfer/retraining within the company are allowed.

**8.** According to the surveyed employers, the state can promote the hiring of veterans primarily by providing a transition period and rehabilitation of the demobilized, as well as by directly informing society about veterans as promising employees with unique experience and practical skills. Implementation of the obligation of employers to employ veterans under a certain quota (for example, the quota for employment of people with disabilities) is considered by interviewees to be an ineffective and inappropriate incentive tool. Employers are more likely to respond to tax discounts and new opportunities for Ukrainian business development.

**9.** Based on the experience of interviewed employers, cooperation with state employment centers does not bring the desired results. During the interviews, the employers assessed the candidate selection services as low-quality, and the training services as not up-to-date, with outdated methods. At the same time, it is undeniable that employment centers can play an important role in the employment process of veterans.

**10.** The results of in-depth interviews within the scope of this pilot study of needs and obstacles in the employment of veterans indicate the spread of the tendency to destroy stereotypes about veterans in the work environment. Employers with experience of employing veterans urge to work on adaptation not only of the veteran, but also of the entire team; not to idealize veterans, not to impose preferential working conditions and special attention - not to create situations of "disservice" that negatively affect the development and motivation of veterans; perceive veterans as full-fledged members of society, regardless of the physical and psychological consequences of participation in hostilities.



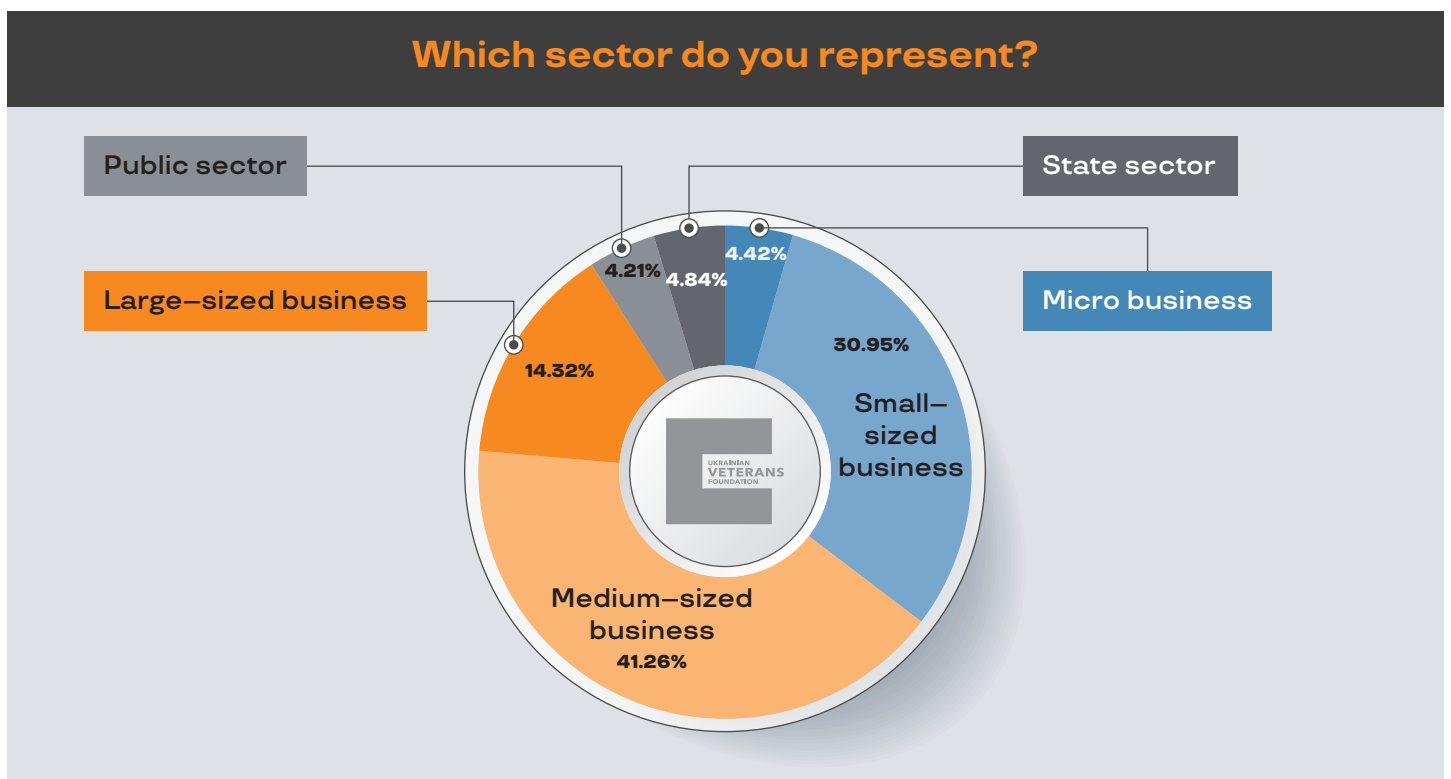
# RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS



As part of the empirical part of the study "Needs and obstacles in the employment of veterans", in cooperation with the employment platforms Work.ua and Lobby X, from June 19 to July 17, the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation conducted an anonymous online survey of employers of the aforementioned platforms.

475 employers took part in the survey, among which 41.26% were representatives of medium-sized businesses; 30.95% – small businesses; 14.32% – large-sized business; 4.42% – micro business; as well as state and public sector employers - 4.84% and 4.21%, respectively.

## Which sector do you represent?



**As for the geographical representation of the companies and organizations** of the interviewed employers, the absolute majority is concentrated in and around the capital – 14% in the city of Kyiv and 13% in the Kyiv region.

Employers of companies concentrated in the following regions are also widely represented in the survey: Lviv (8%), Dnipropetrovsk (7%), Odesa (6%), Kharkiv (5%), Vinnytsia (5%), Cherkasy (3%), Zaporizhzhia (3%), Ivano-Frankivsk (3%), Zhytomyr (3%), Poltava (3%), Rivne (3%), Khmelnytskyi (3%), Chernihiv (3%), Sumy (2%), Mykolayiv (3%), Kirovohrad (3%), Ternopil (2%), Zakarpattia (2%), Volyn (2%), Chernivtsi (2%). Less than 3% of companies are represented in the regions where the vast majority of territories are under occupation – Kher-son (2%), Donetsk (1%), Luhansk (1%).

**By field of activity**, the surveyed employers' companies are represented in a wide spectrum: retail trade (13.68%), industrial production (10.53%), construction and architecture (8.84%), hotel and restaurant business (5.89%), IT (6.53%), auto business (5.47%), agribusiness (5.26%), transportation and logistics (4.84%), public sector (4%), medicine and pharmaceuticals (2.95%), education (2.74%), textile and garment industry and

## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

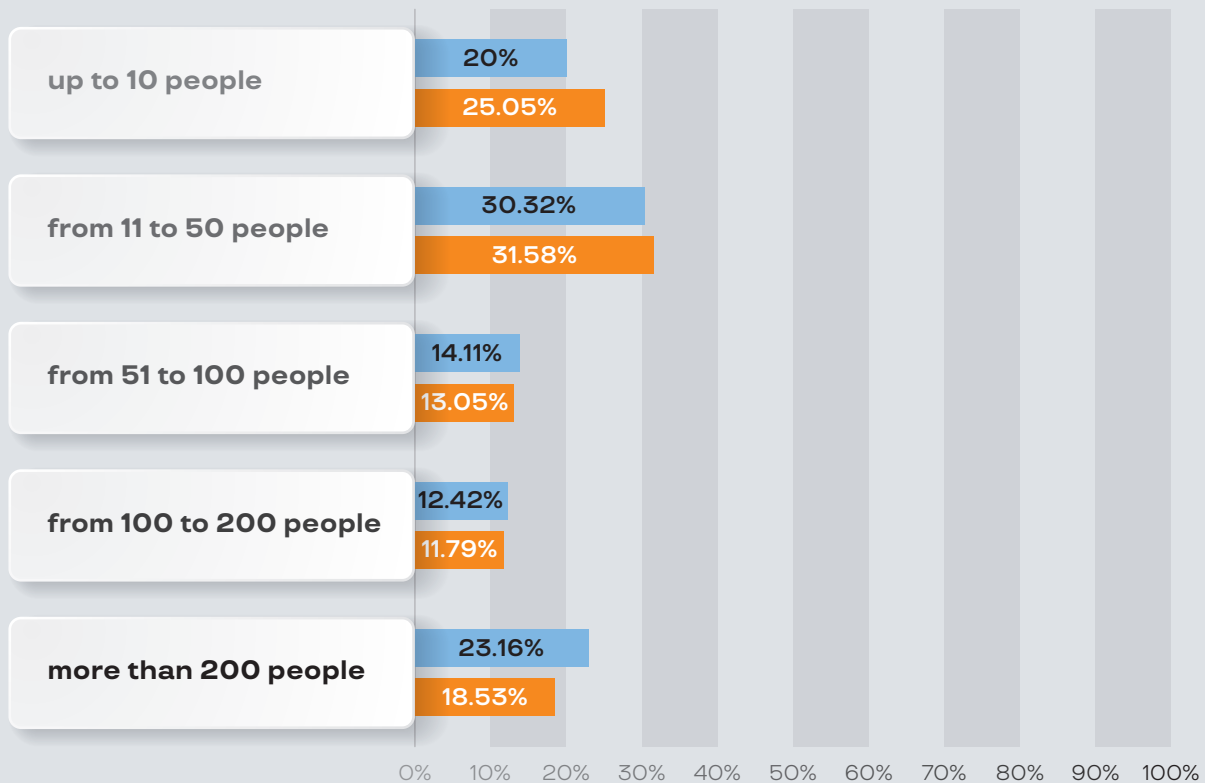
banking (2.32%), civil service (2.32%), PR and marketing (1.47%), woodworking industry (1.05%), printing industry (1.05%), tourism (0.84%), military (0.84%), defense-industrial complex (OPK - 0.63%), processing industry (0.42 %). 16% of respondents indicated their own version of the field of activity of the company they represent, among which the following are common: service, consulting, wholesale trade, mechanical engineering, security and safety, distribution, culture, media, sports facilities, rehabilitation, recruiting abroad, etc.

**By position in the company/organization**, the absolute majority of respondents are employees of personnel management or HR (50.74%). At the same time, 16.84% of respondents are managing partners or founders of the company; 10.53% – top managers; 9.68% – heads of departments/sectors; 6.11% – middle managers; 3.79% – CEO. 2.32% indicated their own answer option, including: office manager, accountant, assistant director, analyst, project manager, lawyer, personnel department employee, director of a state institution, and recruitment manager.

Until February 24, 2022, **the average number of employees in the companies and organizations** of the interviewed employers was mostly "up to 50 people". The average number of employees "up to 10 people" had 20% of the interviewed employers; "from 11 to 50 people" – represented of the interviewed employers 30.32%; "from 51 to 100 people" – 14.11%; "from 100 to 200 people" – 12.42%; "over 200 people" – 23.16%.

Based on the responses of employers surveyed, the average number of employees in their companies/organizations/enterprises has changed after February 24, 2022. Thus, 25.05% of surveyed employers have an average number of employees of up to 10 people; from 11 to 50 people – 31.58%; from 51 to 100 people – had 13.05% of companies; from 100 to 200 people – 11.79%; more than 200 people – 18.53%.

### What was the average number of employees in your company/organization until February 24, 2022 / after February 24, 2022 ?

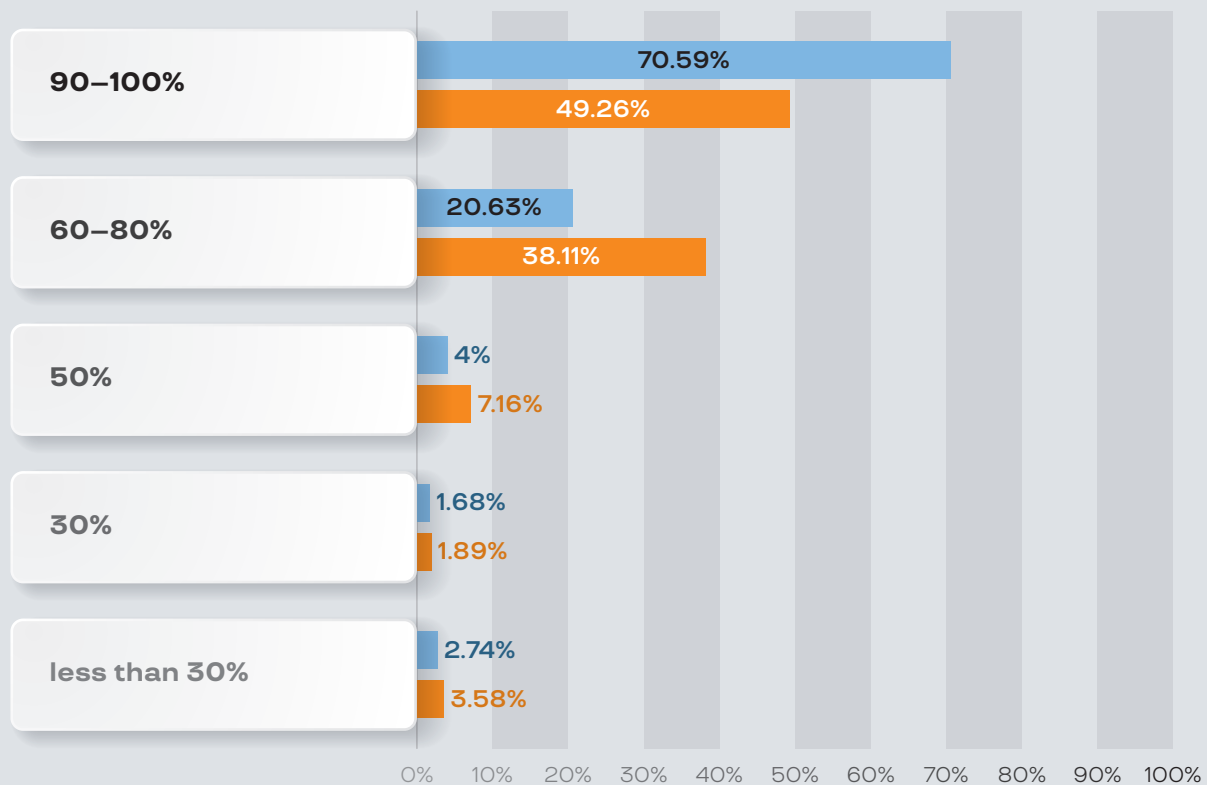


Also, during the full-scale invasion, the number of occupied positions underwent changes. According to the answers of the surveyed employers, by February 24, 2022, 70.95% of them had 90–100% staff; 20.63% of respondents answered that their enterprises were stuffed by 60–80%; 4% of respondents – by 50%; 2.74% had less than 30%; and 1.68% were stuffed by 30%.

In turn, after February 24, 2022, the number of occupied positions in enterprises, according to the results of the survey, partially decreased. 49.26% of surveyed employers have 90–100% staff; in 38.11% had 60-80% of staff; 7.16% had 50 %; 3.58% had less than 30%; and 1.89% were stuffed by 30%.

## How staffed was your enterprise

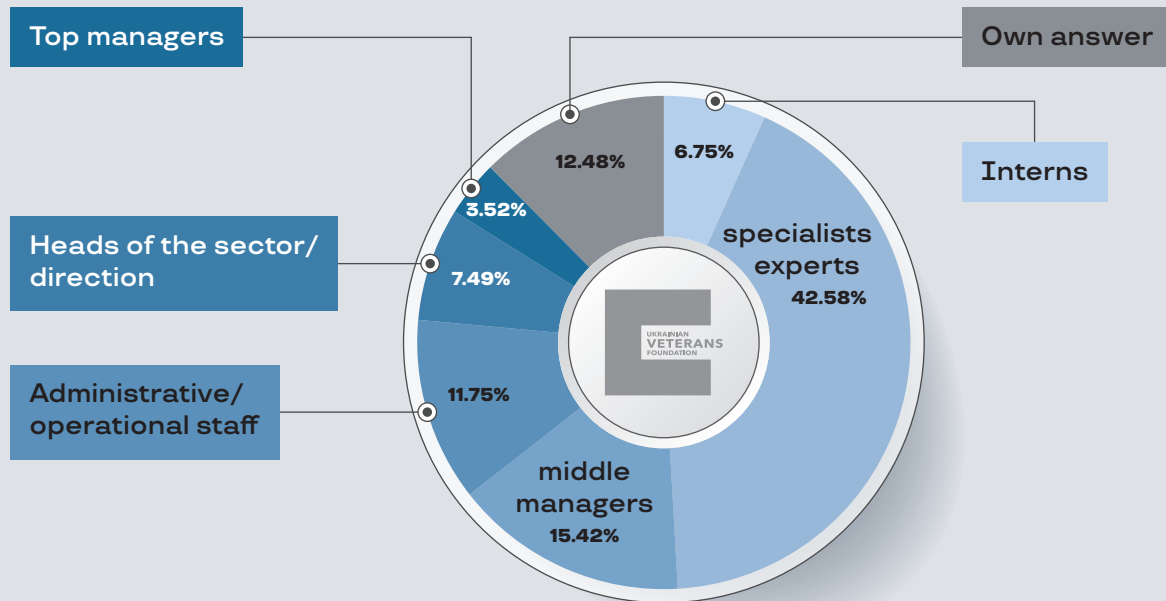
before February 24, 2022 / after February 24, 2022 ?



Answering the question "**Specialists of what level of qualification do you most need now?**", 42.58% of respondents said that they need specialists/experts; 15.42% of respondents need middle managers; 11.75% – administrative/operational employees; 6.75% – interns; 7.49% – heads of the sector/direction; 3.52% needed top managers.

About 12.5% of respondents indicated their own answer to this question, among which the following predominate: workers, drivers, line and production personnel, and sellers. Among them are employers who do not need to recruit. Employers also indicated that they need a bartender, a caregiver, a cook, a customer service manager and a sales manager, and cleaners.

## Specialists of what level of qualification do you most need now?



## Perception of the veteran as an employee and the experience of cooperation

The absolute majority (65.05%) of the surveyed employers still have no experience working with veterans, on the other hand, about a quarter of the respondents (25.05%) have little experience; 6.95% – have considerable experience; 2.95% had difficulty answering this question.

To the question "What was the experience of working with veterans in the same team in your company/organization?" about a third of respondents who have such experience answered, 35.53% of them consider their experience working with a veteran to be unequivocally positive; 32.24% – rather positive; 21.05% – neutral; 7.89% – rather negative; 0.66% – unequivocally negative. It was difficult for 2.63% of such respondents to answer this question.

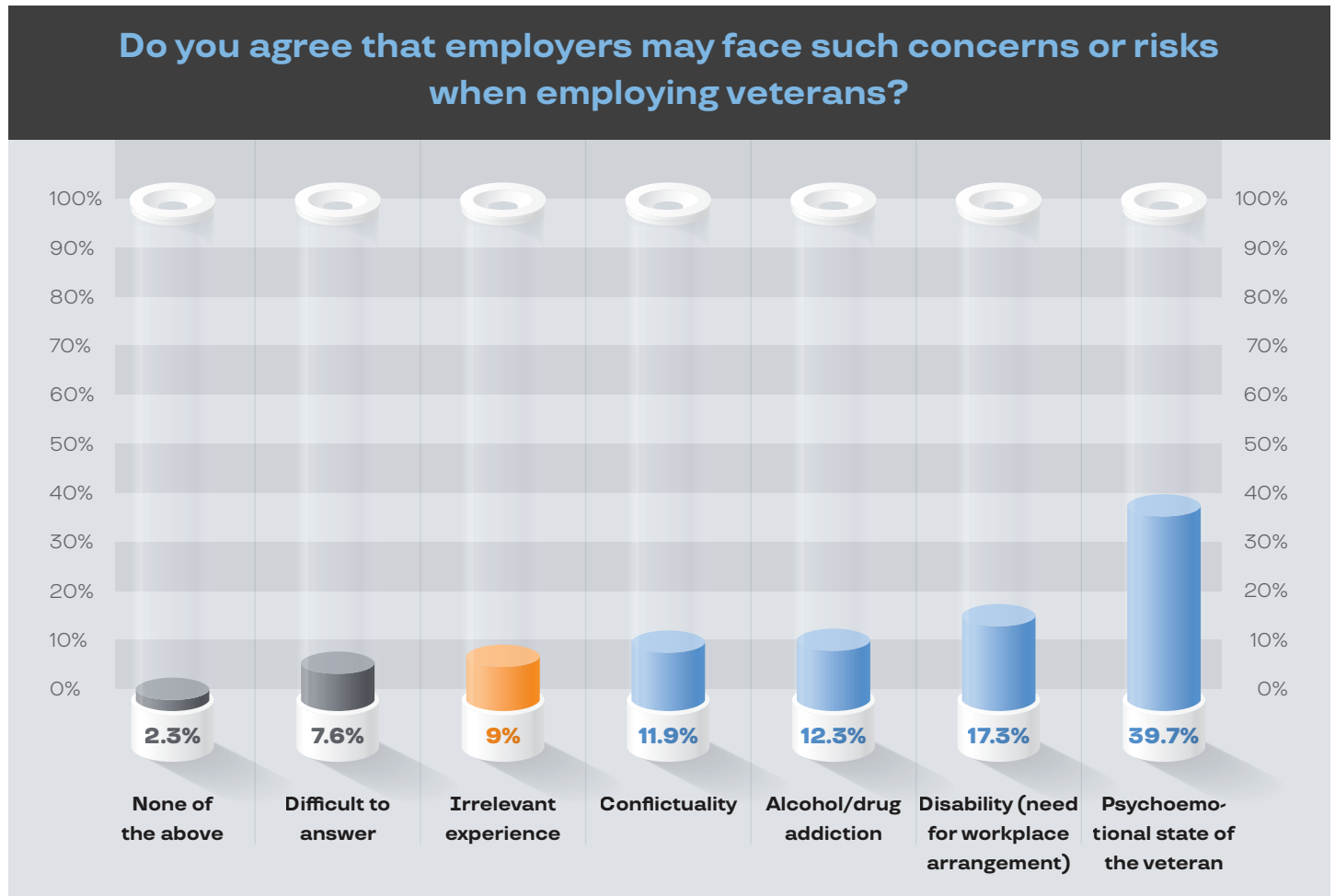
According to the surveyed employers, veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war are best characterized by the following traits: strong civic stance (16.31%); discipline (11.18%); emotional instability (10.7%); straightness (9.23%); stress resistance (8.76%); responsibility (8.01%); diligence (6.99%); high motivation (3.73%); independence in decision-making (2.89%); conscientiousness (2.33%); leadership skills (1.96%); law-abiding (1.3%); cruelty (0.93%); tendency to violence (0.56%).

It was difficult for 13.14% of respondents to answer this question; for 0.37%, none of the listed features characterizes veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war, and 2.24% indicated their own variant of the answer, among which some emphasized the lack of experience working with veterans or indicated that they did not know.

At the same time, in the open answers, respondents also indicated the following traits of veterans: "laziness", "detachment", "positive outlook on life", "the difficulties of transitioning to a peaceful life are individual for each person", "they believe that everyone is to blame", "our people they are still fighting." Some noted that it all depends on each specific person and conditions, length of service.

Speaking about the fears and risks that employers may face when employing veterans, 39.68% of

interviewed employers agreed that the psycho-emotional state of veterans is a risk for the employer; 17.25% indicated a possible disability, which leads to the need to arrange a workplace. About 12% also noted as a risk possible alcohol/drug addiction of veterans (12.28%) and conflict (11.85%), and 8.99% – irrelevant experience of veterans. It was difficult for 7.62% to answer this question, and 2.33% of the respondents do not consider any of the above to be a cause for concern or a risk in the employment of veterans.



Answering the question **"What do you think will be the level of competence of veterans after demobilization compared to civilian job seekers?"**, 28.63% of respondents indicated that the difference between the level of competence of veterans and civilian job seekers will be imperceptible; 24.21% of respondents believe that most veterans will lose their previous qualifications and will need additional training; 22.11% believe that most veterans will acquire new competencies during military service that will be useful in the labor market.

For 23.79%, it was difficult to answer this question, and 1.26% of respondents indicated their own version of the answer, namely "everything will depend on the level of the veteran's psychological adaptation to a peaceful life and the coincidence of his own values with the values of the company"; "a number of received competencies of fighters can be more advantageous compared to the competencies of civilians"; "they (veterans) will have an uninteresting previous life"; "everything depends on the company's field of work. For us, the comparison is incorrect"; "veterans will require greater adaptation efforts from the employer"; "psycho-emotional state will affect veterans' competence"; "acquired skills and competencies acquired during military service will not be in demand on the labor market."

According to the survey of employers, the most likely point at which they may learn about a candidate's experience in combat situations is during the interview stage, as believed by 67.79% of the respondents. On the other hand, 22.32% of employers think that candidates include such experience in their resumes.

However, 3.58% of employers believe that they will almost never learn about a candidate's combat experience during the initial resume review. Additionally, 3.16% think that candidates do not disclose this experience

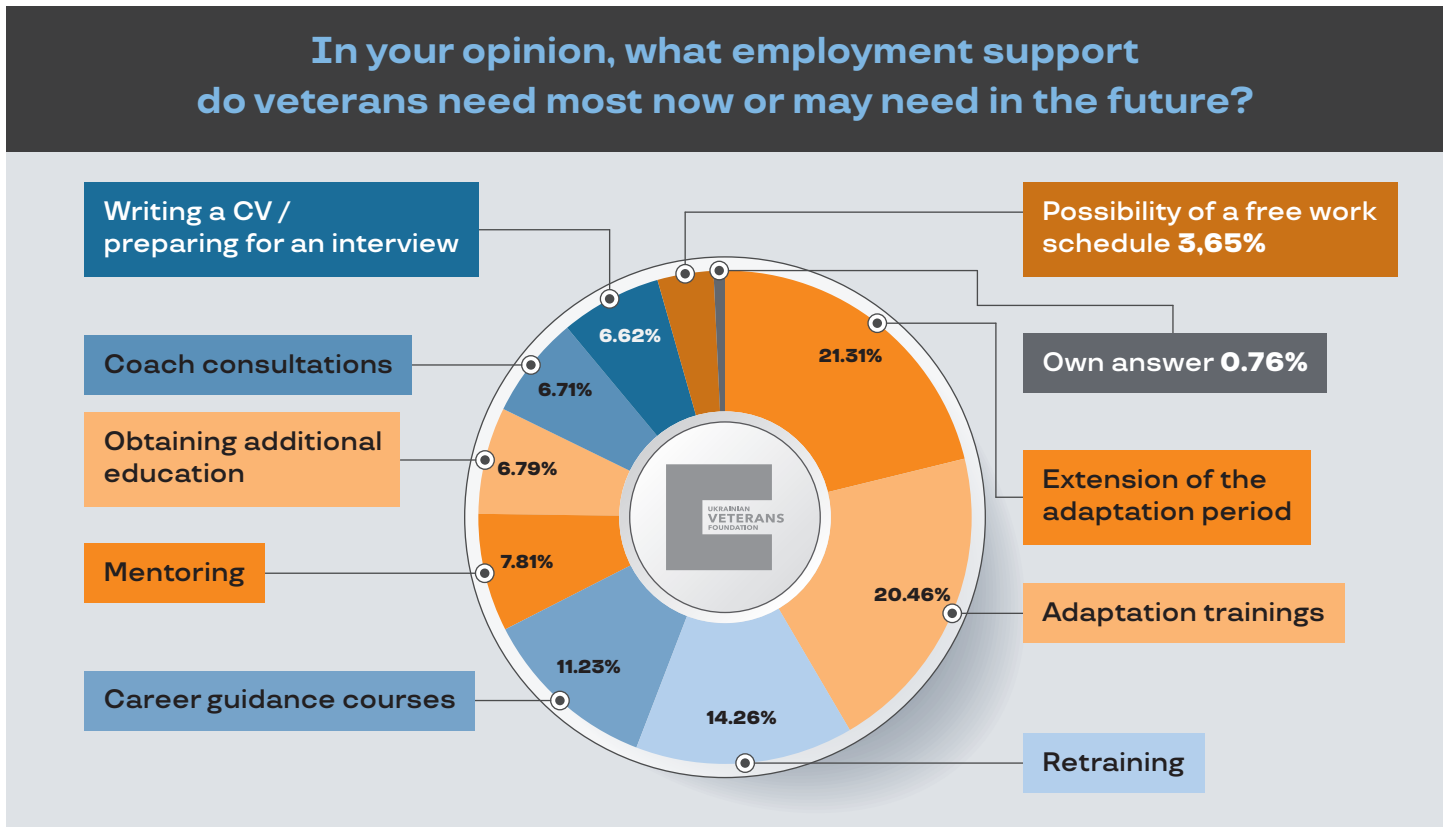
## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

in their application materials, while another 3.16% believe they may only find out about such experience within the candidate's first few months on the job.

Regarding the question of **"How do you feel about veterans potentially concealing their military status and experience when seeking employment?"** the majority of respondents (37.89%) chose the option "neutral." About 32% expressed a "somewhat negative" view, 10.95% had an "unequivocally negative" stance, 2.11% leaned towards a "somewhat positive" view, and 1.89% held an "unequivocally positive" perspective. Approximately 15.16% of the respondents couldn't provide a clear answer to this question.

According to the surveyed employers, currently and in the future, veterans will mostly need support in employment in the following areas: continuation of the adaptation period (21.31%); adaptation training (20.46%); requalification (14.26%); career guidance courses (11.63%); mentorship (7.81%); obtaining additional education (6.79%); coaching and consultations (6.71%); resume writing/interviewing preparation (6.62%); the option of flexible working hours (3.65%).

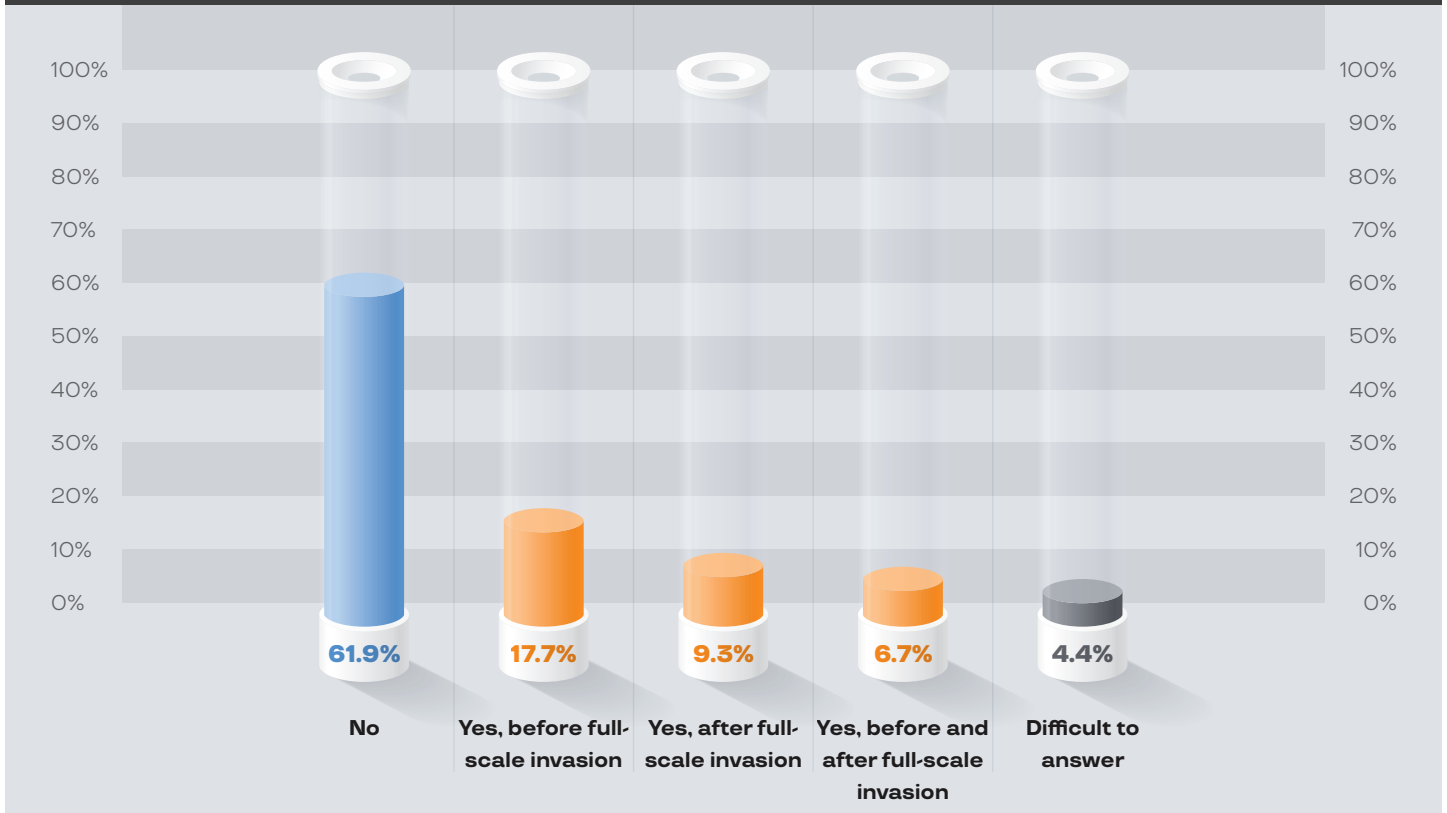
Additionally, 0.76% of the respondents provided their own answers, with many mentioning the need for psychological and mental support. They also emphasized the importance of workplace adaptation and accessibility in cases of severe injuries. These responses underscore the need for an individualized approach, as it's challenging to predict the condition of each veteran.



## Support of veterans by employers

Most of the surveyed employers lack experience in recruiting veterans, as indicated by 61.89% of the respondents. Meanwhile, 17.68% had such experience before the full-scale invasion, 9.26% after the full-scale invasion, and 6.74% both before and after the full-scale invasion. 4.42% of the respondents couldn't provide a clear answer to this question.

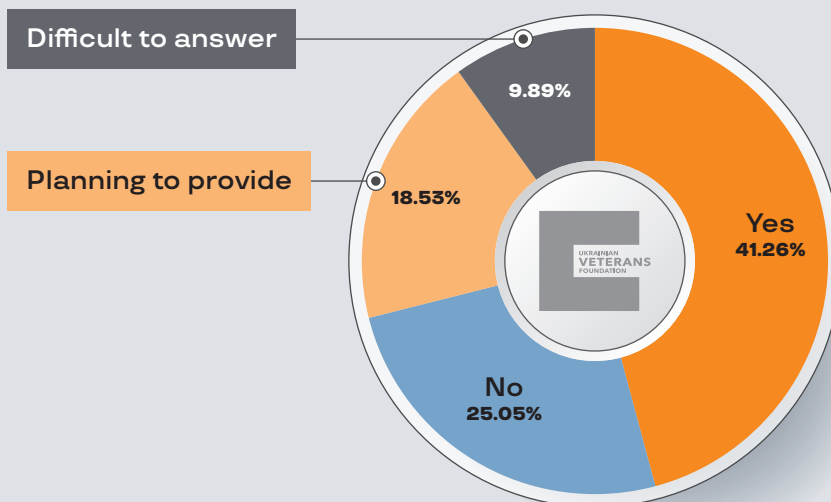
### Do you have experience recruiting (selection, interviewing) veterans?



In response to the question, **"Do you have mobilized team members whose job positions are preserved?"** 62.74% indicated that they do. 27.79% stated that they don't have such colleagues and never had, 6.11% responded that they don't have such colleagues currently but did in the past. 3.37% found it difficult to answer this question.

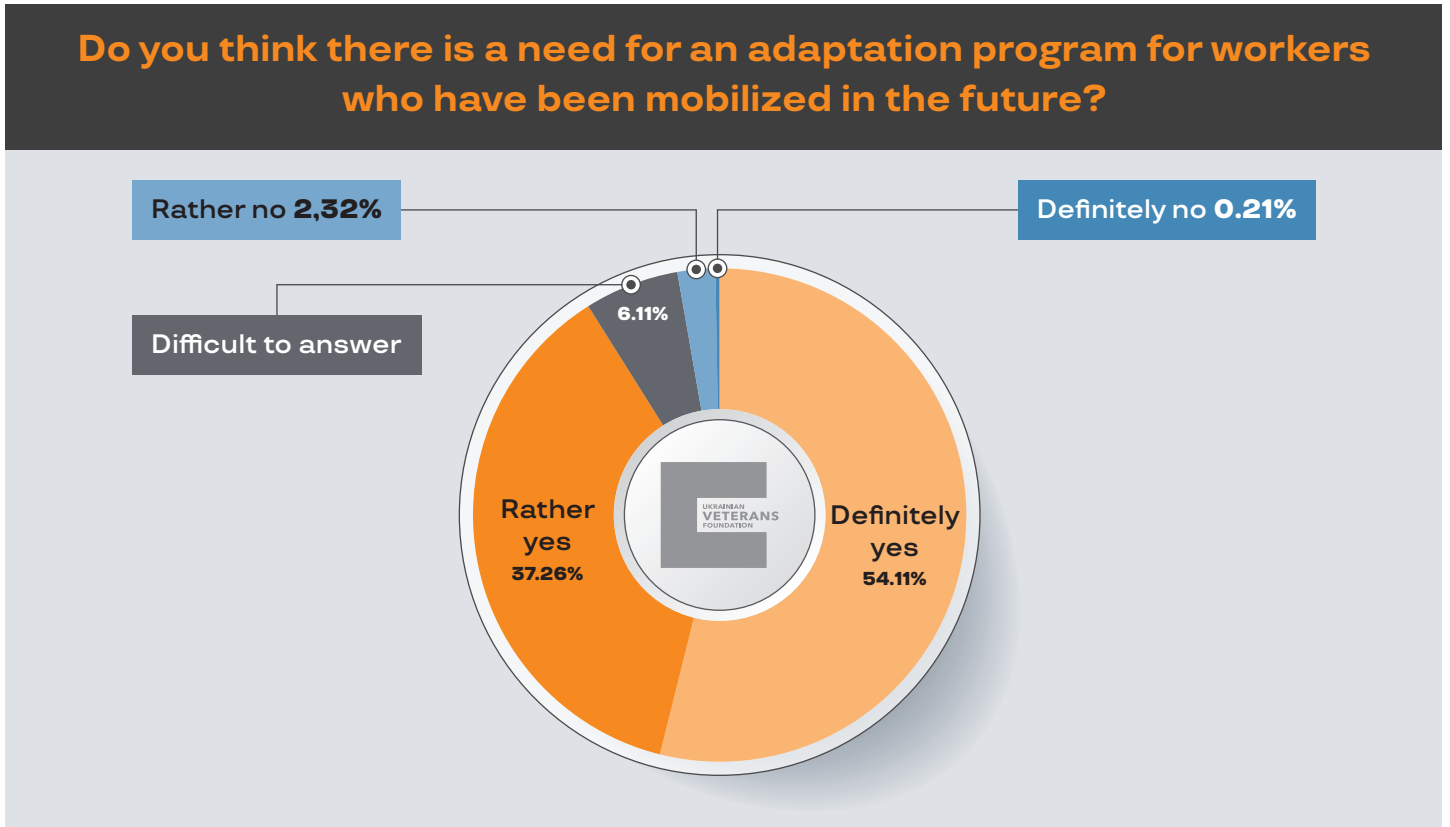
According to the survey results, 46.53% of the surveyed employers **have programs/measures in place for the adaptation of new employees**. In a quarter of the cases (25.05%), such programs are not provided, and 18.53% of respondents among the employers plan to implement such programs and measures. Approximately 10% of the respondents were unable to give a clear answer to this question.

### Does your company have an onboarding program/measures for new employees?





At the same time, the absolute majority of respondents believe that **an adaptation program will be needed for employees who were mobilized**. "Definitely yes" was the answer of 54.11%, and "rather yes" was chosen by 37.26%. Approximately 2.5% of respondents gave a negative response, and 6.11% found it difficult to answer this question.



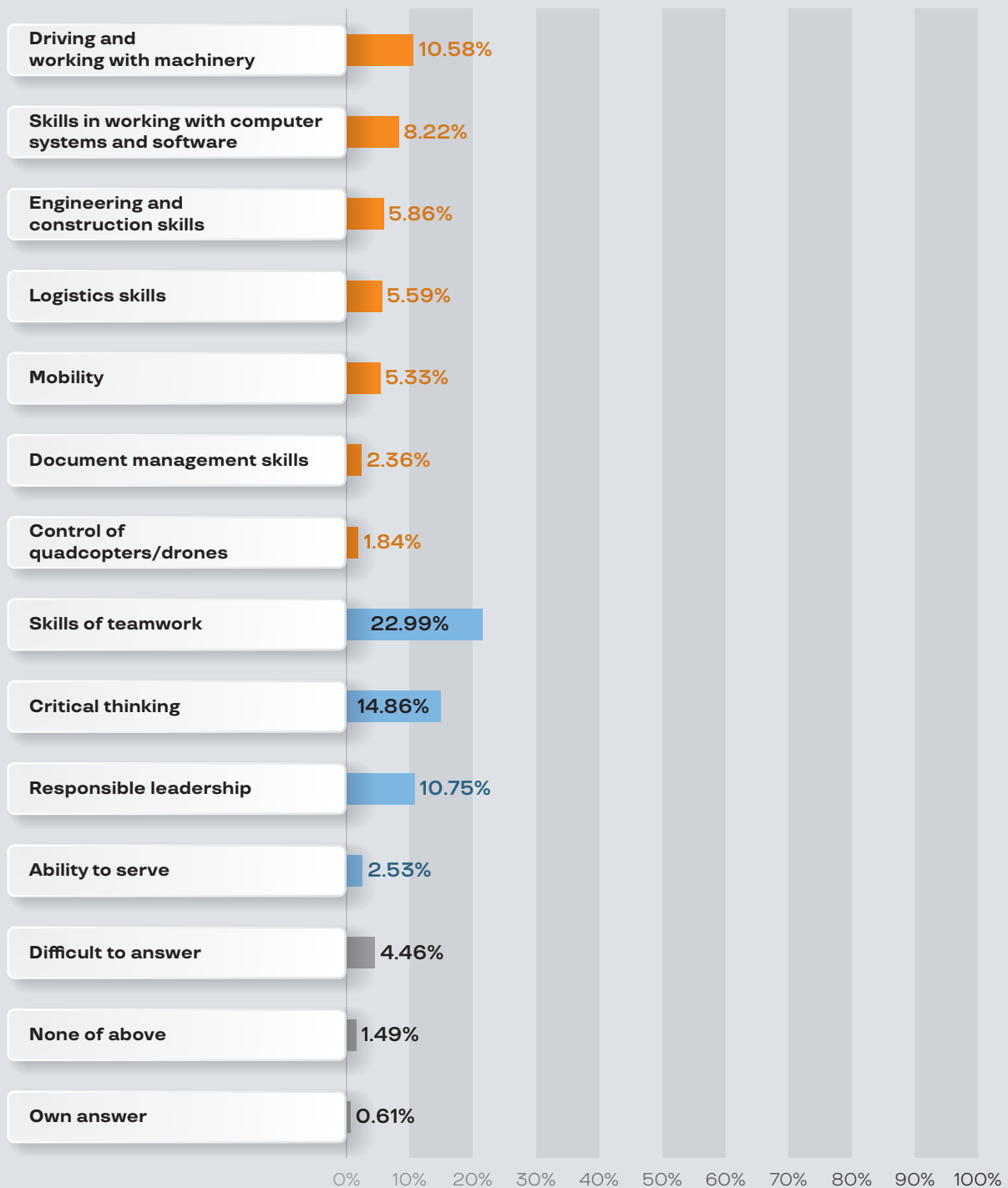
In response to the question, **"At what stage do employers need to plan further adaptation for employees who have been mobilized?"** employers provided the following answers: after the return of mobilized employees due to injury or demobilization – 33.89%; at the beginning of an employee's mobilization – 24%; before demobilization – 13.68%; after general demobilization – 7.58%. Approximately 20.84% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

It was also difficult for surveyed employers to determine their own opinion **on the impact of having a veteran in the workplace on internal communication within the team**. The majority of respondents (36.21%) chose the response option "difficult to answer." However, according to 25.5% of respondents, the presence of a veteran in the workplace has a generally positive impact on internal communication. Another 25.47% believe that nothing will change in internal communication with the introduction of a veteran into the team. About 10.53% gave a response of "definitely positive," and approximately 3% gave a negative response in total.

When it comes to the skills **that veterans bring that can contribute to their employment and career development in the companies/organizations of surveyed employers**, the majority (22.99%) of respondents noted teamwork skills. Other important skills for successful employment of veterans, according to the respondents, include critical thinking (14.86%), responsible leadership (10.75%), driving and technical skills (10.58%), computer systems and software skills (8.22%), engineering and construction skills (5.86%), logistics skills (5.59%), mobility (5.33%), service orientation (2.53%), document management skills (2.53%), communication system management (2.36%), and drone operation (1.84%).

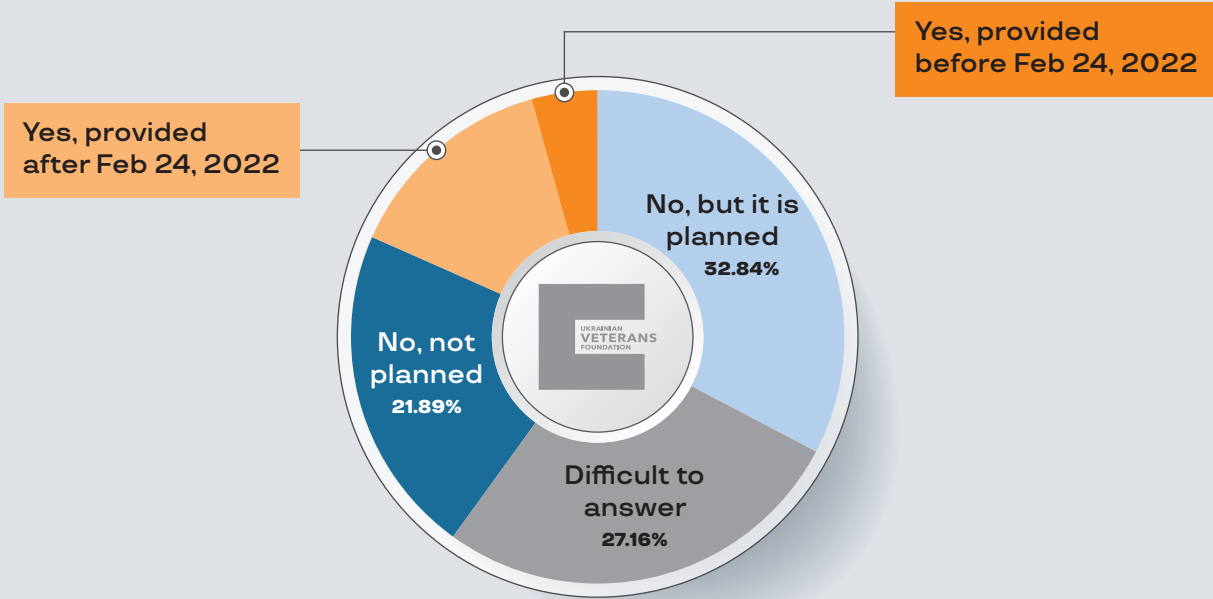
For 4.46% of respondents, it was difficult to answer this question, while 1.49% believe that none of the listed factors contribute to the employment of veterans in their companies. 0.61% of respondents provided their own answer, including factors such as quick adaptability, field medical skills gained in the rescue of soldiers, communication skills, knowledge of foreign languages, and the belief that it depends on many factors.

## In your opinion, what skills of veterans can contribute to their employment and career development in your company/organization?



In view of the results of the survey of employers, despite the positive attitude and understanding of the need to implement adaptation programs and measures, as of the time of the study in June-July 2023, the absolute majority of respondents, employers, have not implemented any measures or programs to support colleagues with experience in combat operations. 32.84% of respondents stated that they have not yet implemented such measures but plan to do so, while 21.89% have not implemented and do not plan to. 13.89% have implemented adaptation measures/programs for colleagues with experience in combat operations after February 24, 2022, and 4.21% implemented such measures before the full-scale invasion by Russia. At the same time, about a quarter of respondents (27.16%) could not provide a clear answer to the question.

**Does your company/organization have specific activities or programs in place to support colleagues with combat experience?**



Regarding **the implemented measures to support colleagues with experience in combat operations, as of today, the surveyed employers have implemented the following:** psychological support (12.59%); workplace adaptation for individuals with disabilities (6.12%); comprehensive reintegration program for demobilized employees (4.14%); additional educational courses (3.24%); sanatorium and resort treatment (1.8%).

At the same time, the majority (46.22%) of surveyed employers do not have any of the aforementioned measures. For 19.42% of respondents, it was difficult to answer this question. 6.47% of respondents provided their own response, with about half of them mentioning the absence of colleagues with experience in combat operations, and another third offering support in the form of financial and other material assistance. Other forms of support mentioned in the responses include "providing the opportunity for free access to a sports club," "financial support for the family," and "training and education for the company's leadership and staff."

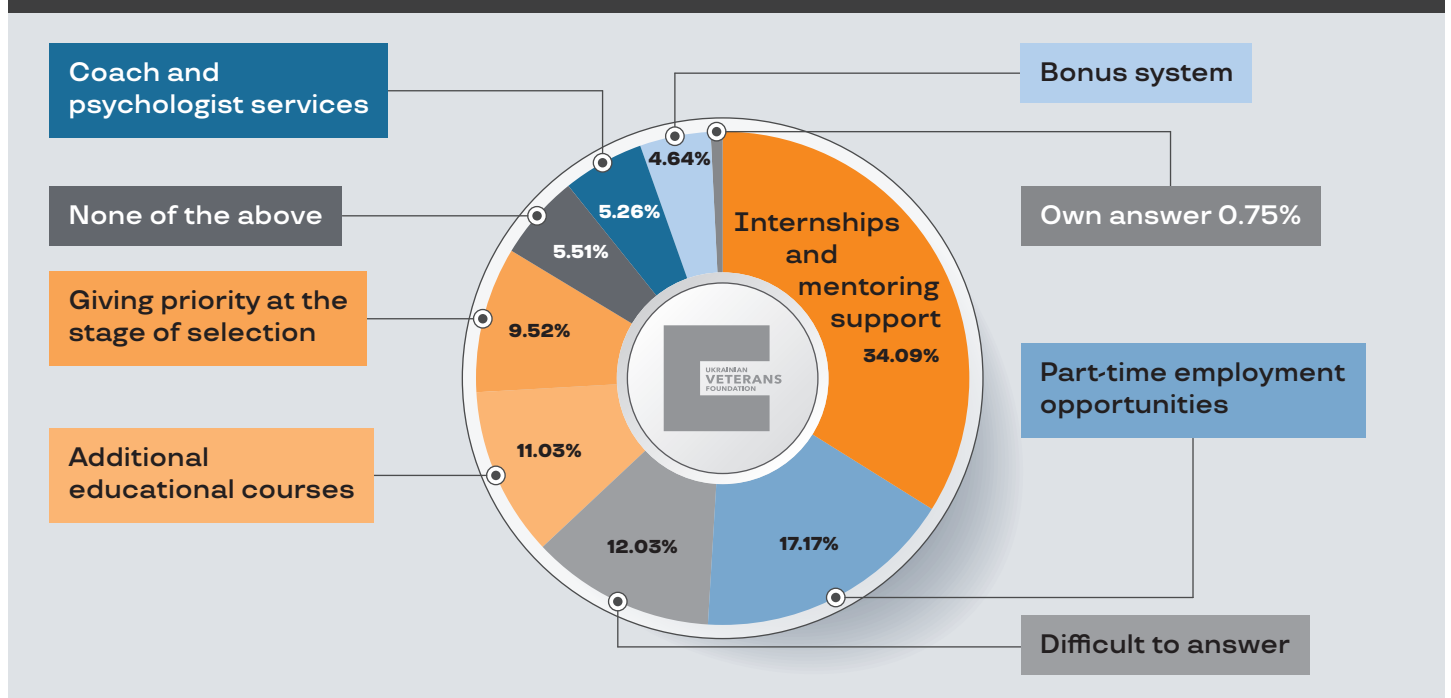
In response to the question **"Does your company have Mental Health Support Programs for employees?"** the majority of respondents (54.53%) from surveyed employers answered "no, not provided." Meanwhile, 18.53% of respondents plan to implement mental health support programs, and 17.26% already have such programs in place. For about 10% of respondents, it was difficult to answer this question.

On their part, the majority of respondents (36.42%) among employers are unsure about needing additional resources to support the mental health of veterans in the workplace. For 23.16% of respondents, external partnership resources are needed to support veterans' mental health, while 20.84% indicated a need for financial resources, and 9.26% mentioned the need for human resources. About 1% of respondents provided their own response, including points such as "implementing a quality support program requires human, financial, and other resources," "the willingness of management to implement support programs," "ending the war is all that is needed," and "if the veteran themselves need it, then maybe."

In response to the question, **"What steps can your company/organization take to assist candidates without civilian work experience, particularly veterans, in finding employment?"** 34.09% of employer respondents said they are able to provide internships and mentorship support to candidates without experience, particularly veterans. Additionally, 17.17% can offer part-time employment opportunities, 11.03% can provide additional educational courses for veterans, 9.52% are capable of giving priority to veterans without

work experience during the selection process, 5.26% can provide coaching and psychological services, and 4.64% can offer a bonus system. However, about 12% of respondents couldn't provide a clear answer to this question, and 5.51% indicated that they couldn't do any of the listed options for assisting veteran candidates without civilian work experience. Around 1% provided their own responses, which generally describe their existing experience and prospects. For instance: "We already have a training system for candidates without work experience. Veterans like these may require an additional program for psychological support and adaptation to civilian life/work," "It's difficult to answer how emotionally stable demobilized veterans will be, and whether it's possible to work with children," "Official employment and social security are provided for by the law on public service."

### What steps can your company/organization take to assist candidates without civilian work experience, particularly veterans, in finding employment?



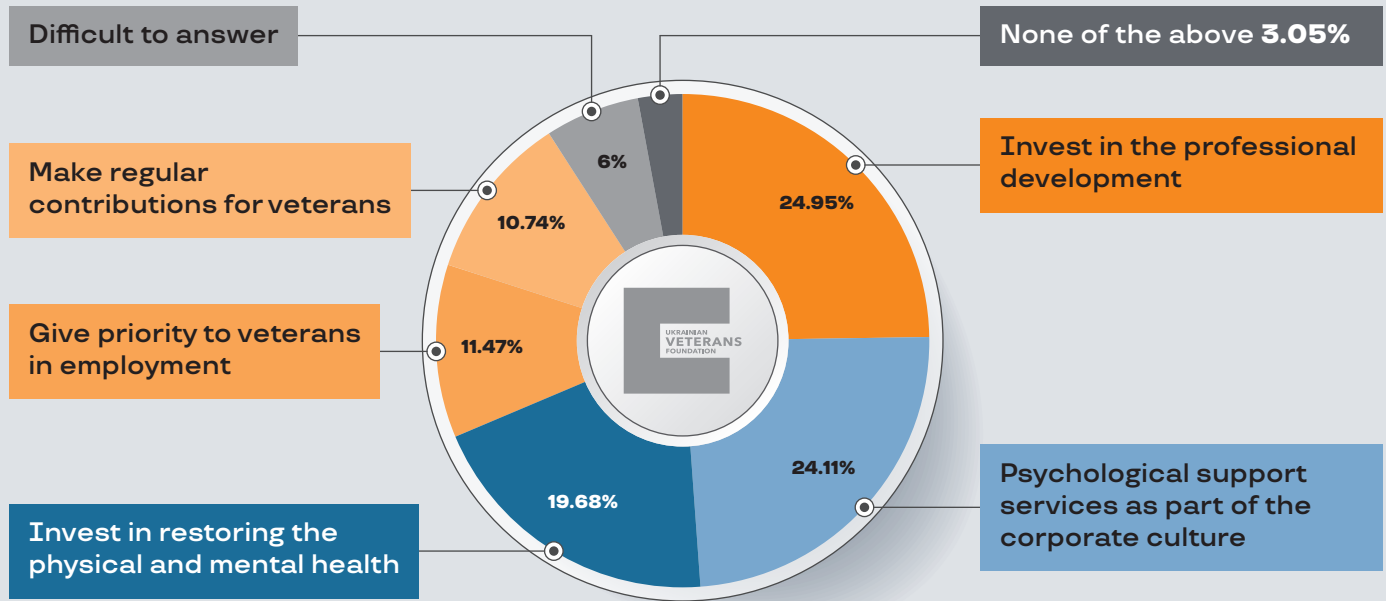
According to the surveyed employers, **after veterans return to work or are hired as new employees, employers can support their productivity through various means.** These tools include additional training (26.52%), providing opportunities for career development within the company (22.62%), mentorship (22.73%), and extended internship periods (19.05%). However, for 6.60% of respondents, it was difficult to provide an answer to this question, and 1.52% believe that none of the options listed can support the productivity of veterans in civilian jobs. Additionally, around 1% of respondents provided their own responses regarding ways to support a veteran's productivity: individual adaptation program; part-time work, flexible schedules, additional days off as needed; psychological support; assistance with integration into the team, with psychological support if necessary, for adaptation.

At the same time, the absolute majority, 94.32% of the surveyed employers, believe that it is necessary to create and develop a culture of respect for veterans in the labor market and in society as a whole. A negative response was provided by 1.68%, and 4% could not give a clear answer.

According to the **survey results, as employers, respondents agreed that they could influence the formation of a culture of respect for veterans in the labor market and society as a whole** through the following means: investing in the professional development of veterans working in the company (24.95%); providing psychological support services for company employees as part of corporate culture (24.11%); investing in the physical and mental health recovery of veterans working in the company (19.68%); giving priority to veterans in the hiring process (11.47%); making regular contributions to community organizations, initiatives, and

programs that effectively support veterans (10.74%). Meanwhile, 6% of respondents could not give a clear answer to this question, and 1.68% indicated "none of the above" as their response. Additionally, 1.37% of surveyed employers provided their own response options, such as "not distinguishing them from others, employees who were not in the war have also been under fire and have psychological issues"; "not discriminating as a job candidate"; "grant veterans the same rights as everyone, evaluate based on professional skills and development prospects, no preference or discrimination should exist"; "treat them with respect, regulate workload, prioritize professional growth"; "provide internship opportunities."

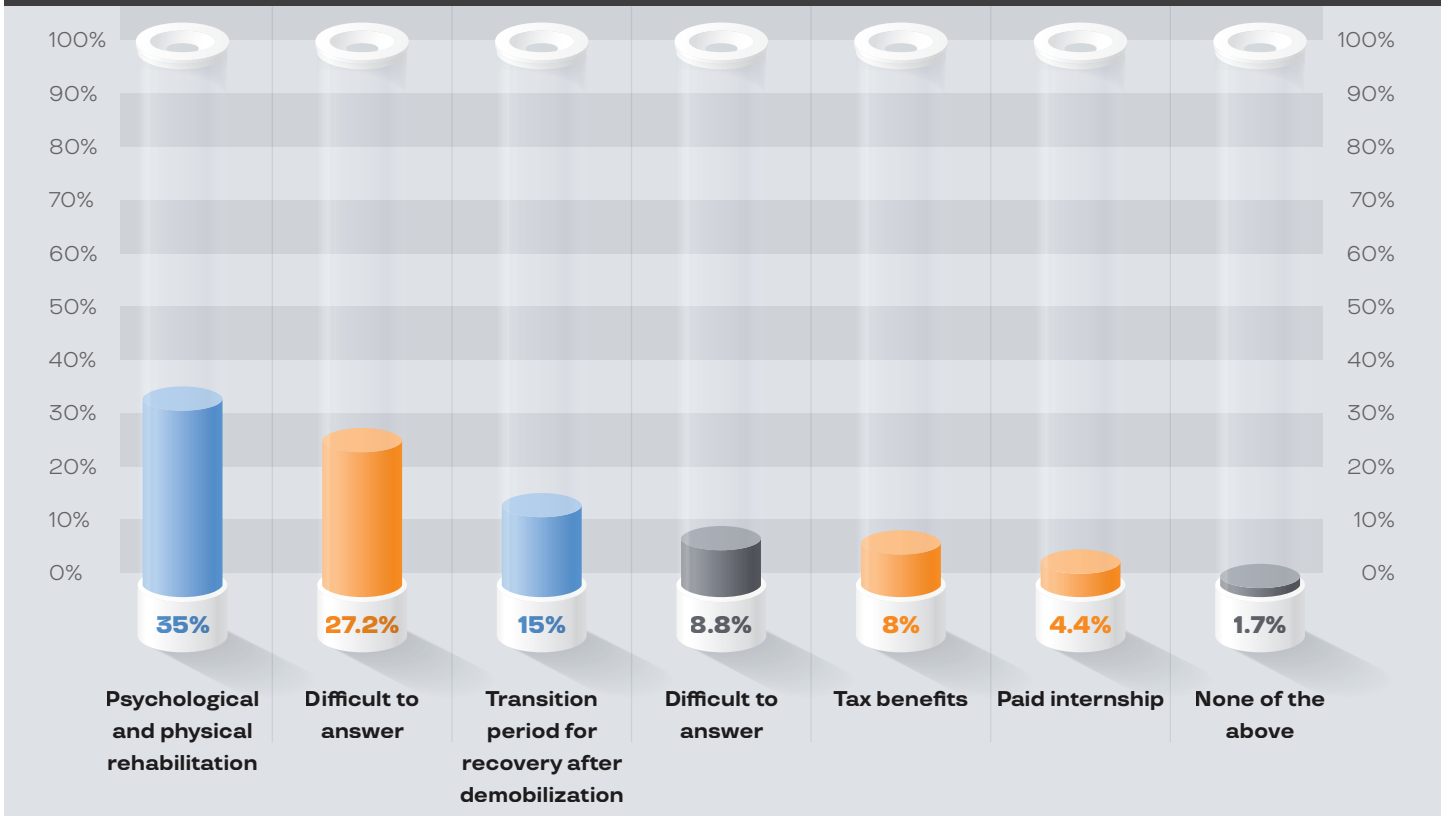
### How can you as an employer influence the formation of a culture of respect for veterans in the labor market and in society as a whole?



### Support from the government and society for the employment of veterans

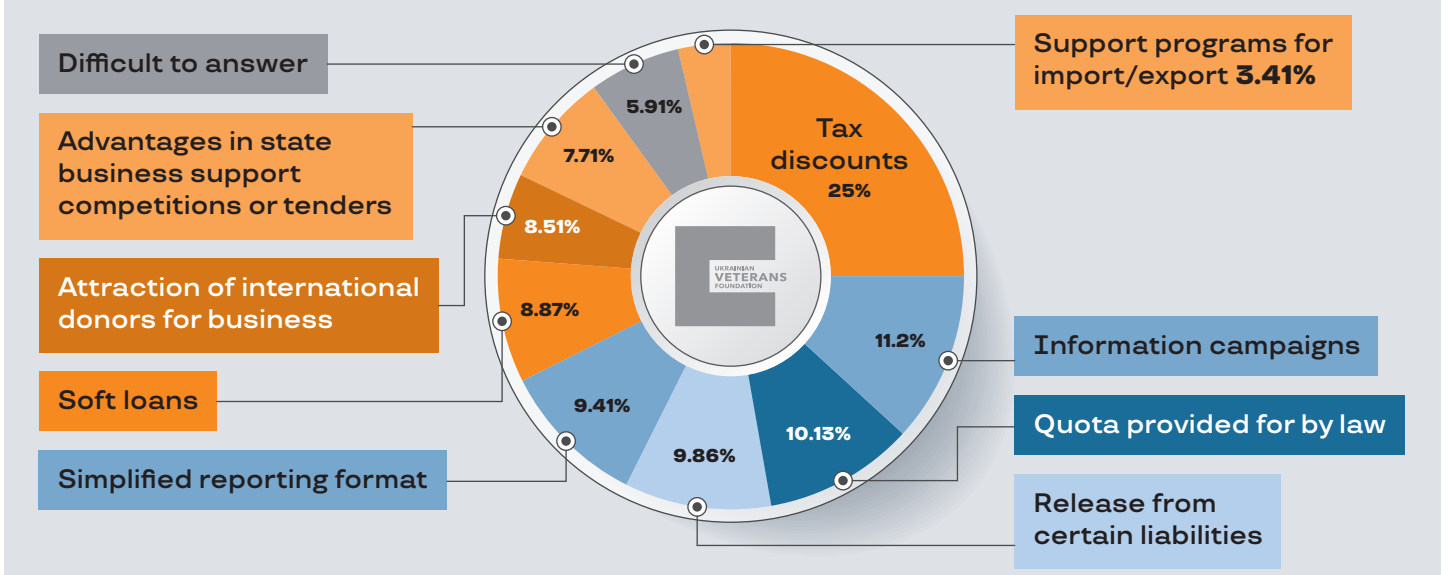
According to the surveyed employers, the state can incentivize the hiring of veterans through the following support services: psychological and physical rehabilitation (34.95%); skills upgrading or retraining (27.16%); providing a transitional period for reintegration after demobilization (decompression) (14.95%); tax benefits (8%); paid internships (4.42%). For 8.84%, it was difficult to answer this question, and 1.68% chose the response "none of the above."

### What government support services for veterans encourage their hiring?



At the same time, when asked, **"In your opinion, what measures should the state provide to support companies/organizations in employing veterans?"** the majority (25%) pointed to tax incentives, 11.20% also mentioned information campaigns, 10.13% for quotas as mandated by legislation, 9.86% for exemptions from certain obligations, 8.87% for preferential loans, 9.41% for simplified reporting formats, 7.71% for advantages in government business support programs or tenders, and 8.51% for involving international donors for businesses. Additionally, 3.41% mentioned support programs for import/export. About 5.91% found it difficult to provide a clear answer to this question, and approximately 1% provided their own response, including "a state program for retraining/requalification of veterans," "free psychological support from the state for a year," and "effective operation of state employment centers to assist recruiters."

### In your opinion, what measures should the state provide to support companies/organizations in the employment of veterans?



## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

In the view of surveyed employers, civil society can help employers in employing veterans through various means, such as adaptation training (21.93%), public centers for veterans (19.35%), public employment platforms (17.01%), free coaching and consultations (15.68%), career orientation events (14.01%), and job fairs (11.59%). These forms of support can be valuable in facilitating the employment of veterans.

The additional responses provided by the respondents, such as consultations and training for job seekers on recognizing their competencies, creating resumes, and succeeding in interviews, are important for helping veterans transition into civilian employment. Increasing the legal labor market and fostering a societal culture that is accepting of people with diverse experiences, rather than considering veterans as requiring extra efforts for adaptation.

According to the responses, a significant portion of employers are open to seeking support from civil society organizations and initiatives if such support is available. This includes 42.95% who do not exclude the possibility and 39.58% who are more likely to seek such assistance. A smaller percentage, 9.68%, indicated they are less likely to do so, while 7.79% found it difficult to provide a clear answer..

Summarizing the results of the employer survey, it is important to note that a wide range of Ukrainian businesses, including medium and small enterprises, participated in the survey. These companies are predominantly concentrated around major cities regardless of the region. Despite the ongoing armed conflict in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, representatives of companies from those areas also participated, and their perspectives are included in the survey.

While the majority of respondents had limited or no prior experience in employing or recruiting veterans, more than half of them recognize the need for adaptive measures and programs to support employees with military and combat experience. Additionally, most employers in the survey currently have mobilized employees on their staff and maintain employment for them.

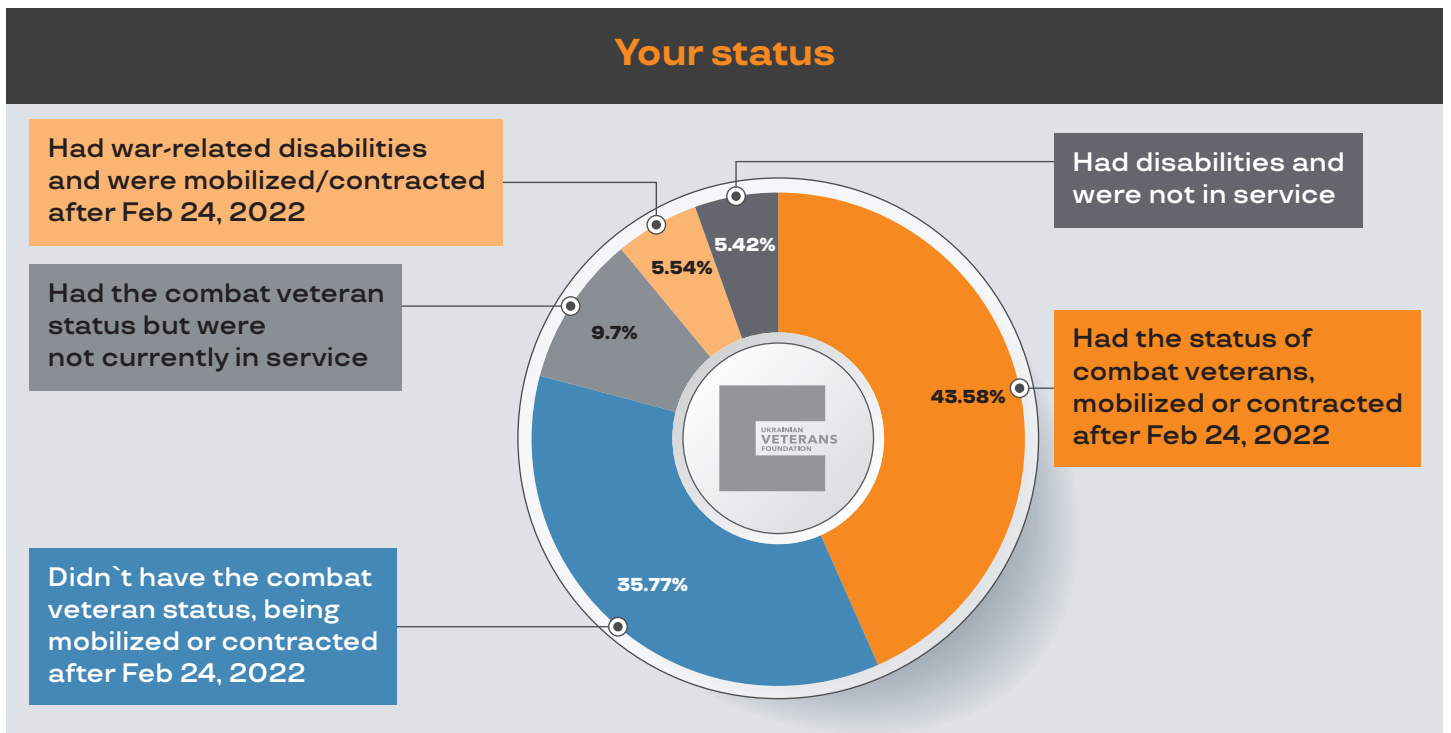


# RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF VETERANS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL REGARDING NEEDS AND OBSTACLES IN CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT



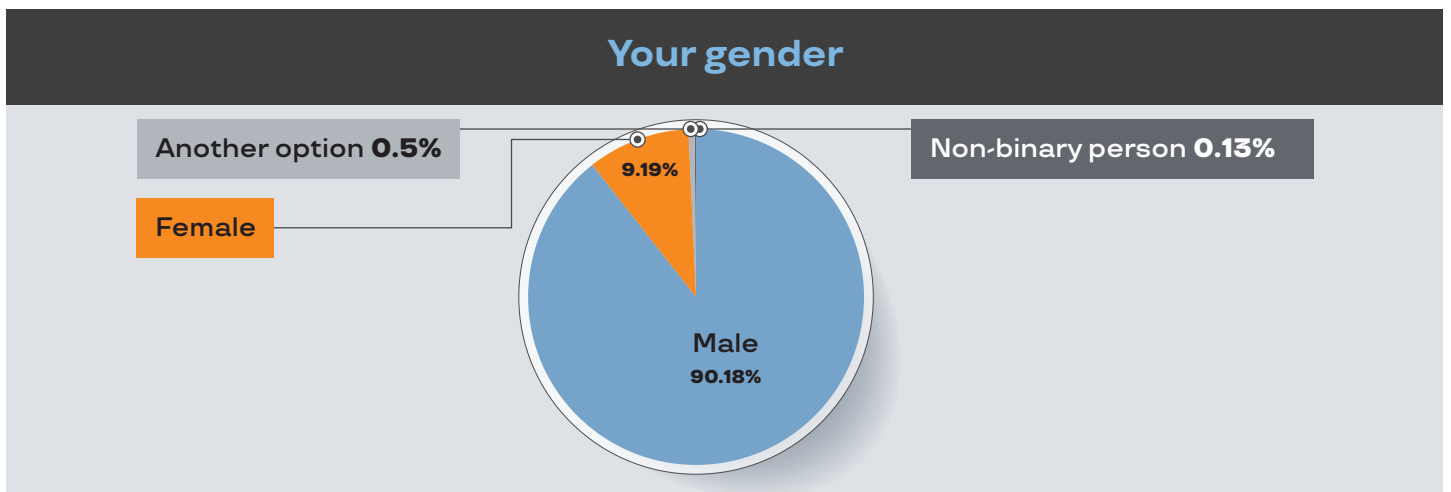
The survey of veterans and current military personnel was conducted from **June 22 to July 22, 2023**. It involved **794** individuals, with the following breakdown: 43.58% had the status of combat veterans (Ukraine's Defender), mobilized or contracted during the full-scale invasion; 35.77% did not have the combat veteran status, being mobilized or contracted after February 24, 2022; 9.7% had the combat veteran status but were not currently in service; 5.42% had disabilities and were not in service; 5.54% had war-related disabilities and were mobilized/contracted during the full-scale invasion.

## Your status

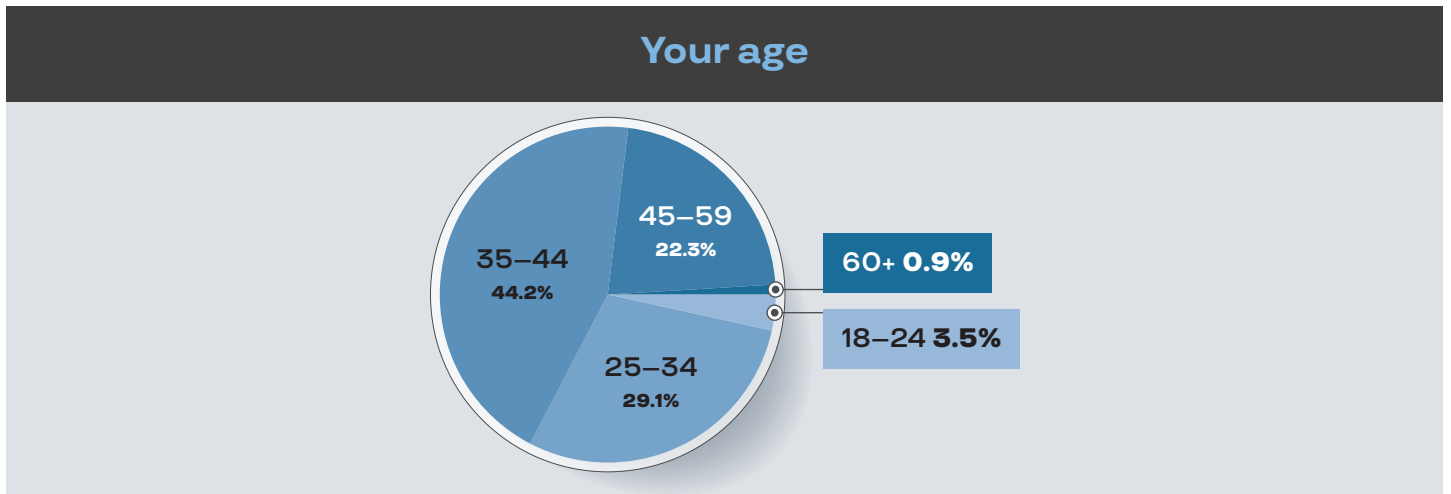


In terms of gender distribution, the survey participants consisted of the following: 90.18% male, 9.19% female, 0.13% non-binary individuals, and 0.5% mentioned another gender identity.

## Your gender

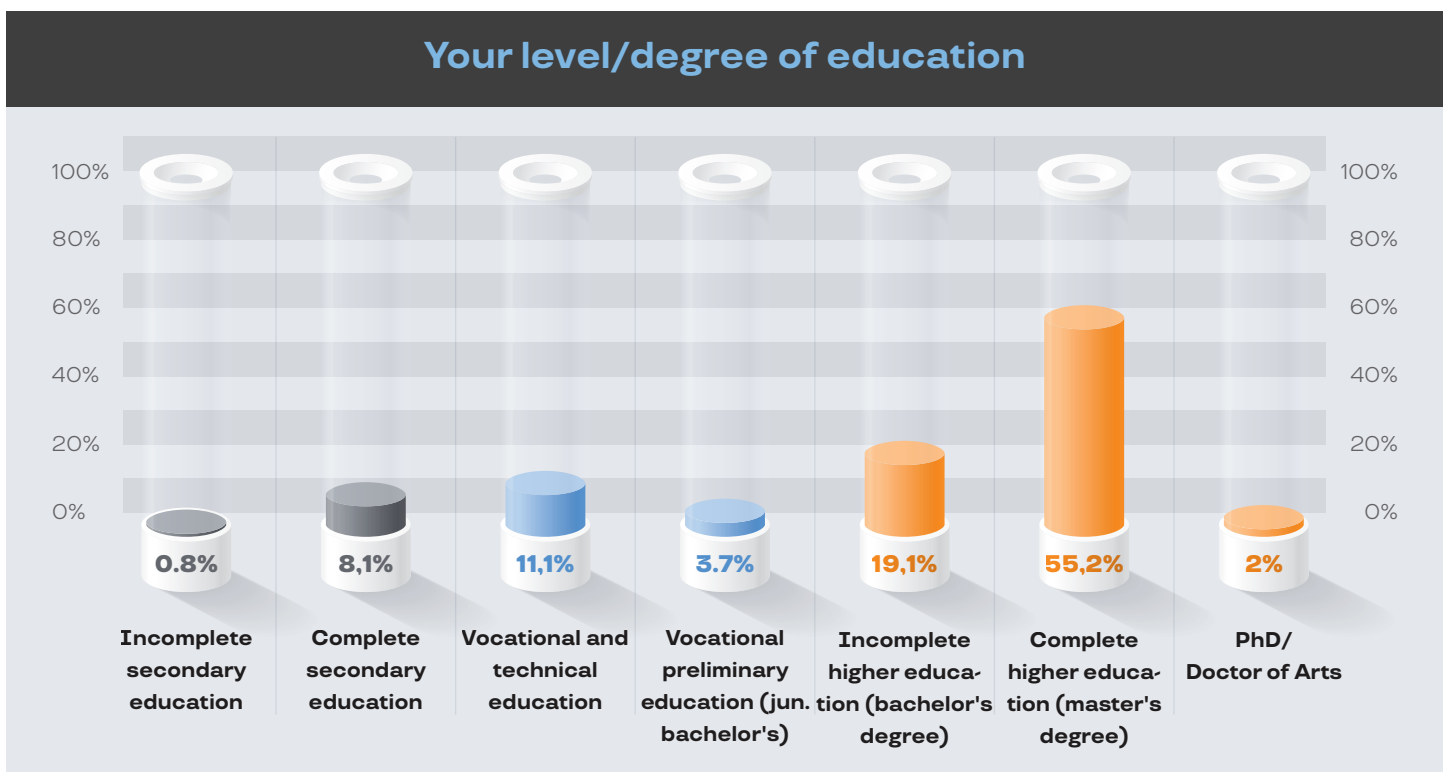


**By age distribution**, 44.2% of respondents are between 35 and 44 years old, 29.1% are young adults aged 25 to 34 years, 22.3% fall into the category of middle-aged individuals aged 45 to 59 years, 3.5% are in the 18 to 24-year-old range, and 0.9% are respondents aged 60 and above.



## Education, Professional Experience, Personal Qualities, and Skills of Veterans

In this section of the survey, the educational and professional characteristics of veterans and military personnel were revealed, including their perception of personal changes and professional development in the context of war. The majority (55.2%) of the surveyed military personnel and veterans have completed a full master's degree. About 19.1% have completed an incomplete higher education degree of "bachelor," and around 11% have vocational or technical education. 8.1% have completed full general secondary education. Additionally, 3.7% have vocational pre-higher education (junior bachelor), 2% hold an academic or creative degree (Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Arts - Candidate of Sciences), and approximately 1% of respondents have incomplete secondary education.

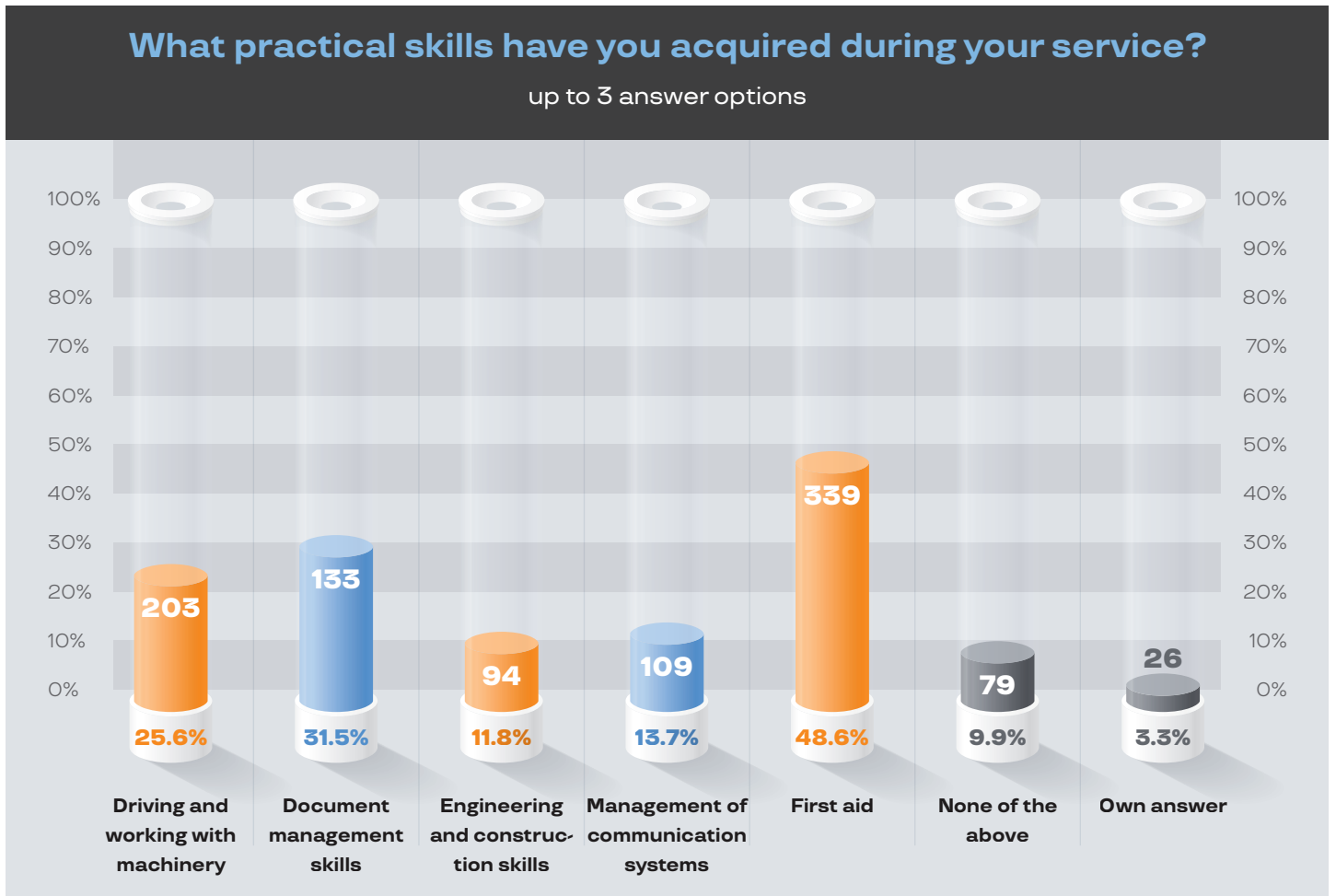


However, the vast majority (82%) of surveyed veterans and military personnel do not have military education. Instead, 18% of the survey participants are professional military personnel.

Regarding their official employment experience, it is also prevalent among the respondents, with 92.8% having such experience, while only 7.2% of the participants have not had such experience.

Responding to the question **"What practical skills have you gained during your service?"**, nearly half (48.7%) of the respondents mentioned first aid skills and people management skills (42.7%). Other commonly mentioned skills included document management (31.5%), driving and equipment operation (25.6%), operating quadcopters/drones (21.2%), computer systems and software skills (16.9%), logistics skills (16.8%), communication system management (13.7%), engineering and construction skills (11.8%), and culinary skills (6.8%). For about 11% of the respondents, it was difficult to answer this question, and approximately 10% chose the option "none of the above."

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide their own answers, and they mentioned a wide range of skills, including military psychology, communication with a diverse range of people, planning, writing endless journals and reports, the skill of not trusting anyone, even if they are the commander, surviving and working in any conditions, tactical and strategic combat leadership, pharmacy, medicines, their circulation, storage, and application, skills dependent on the type of troops (demining, working with mortars, sniping, reconnaissance, artillery, and handling firearms), and others.



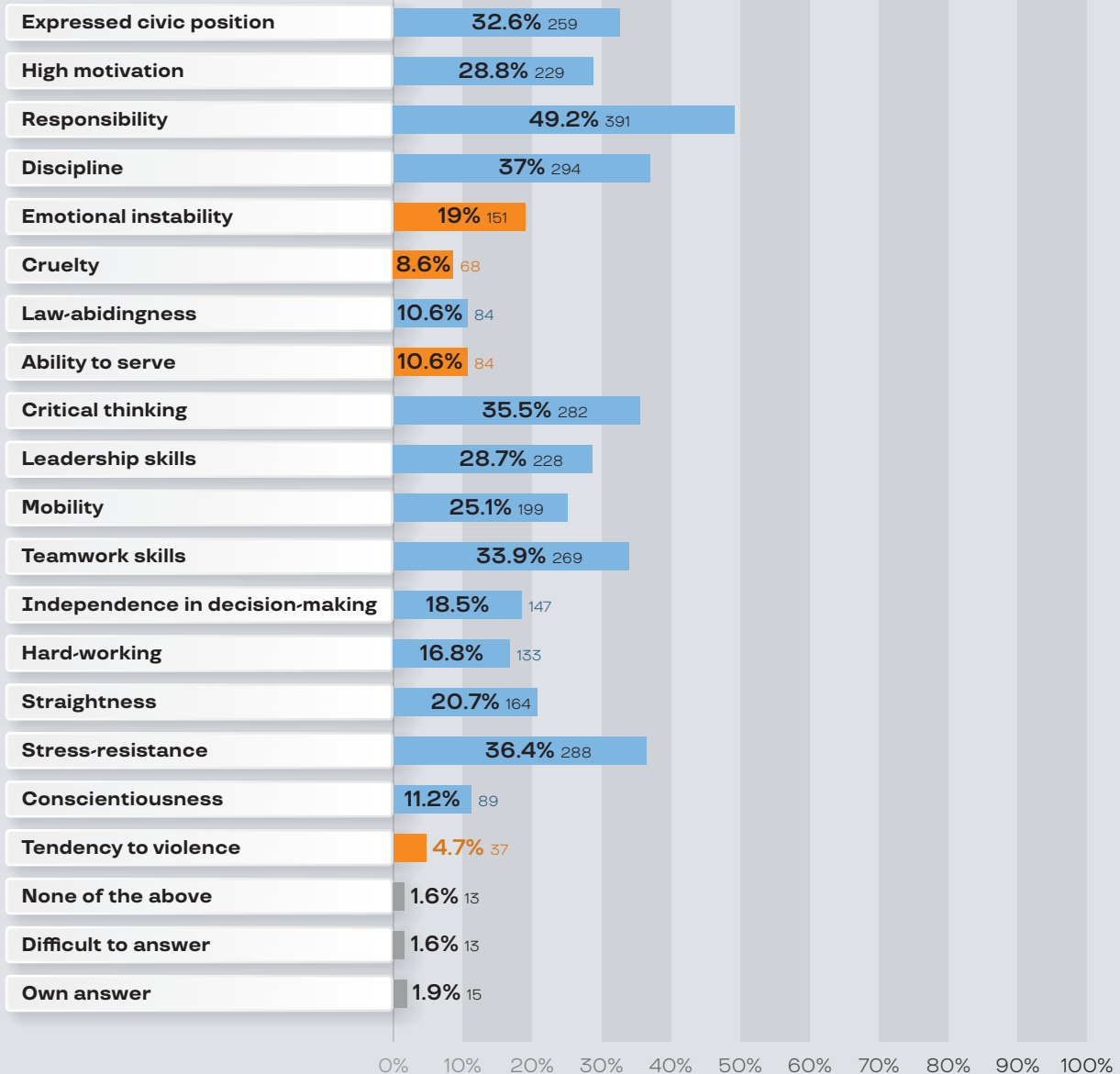
## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

Regarding **the traits and qualities acquired during their service**, the surveyed veterans and military personnel observed the development of various attributes. These include responsibility (49.2%), discipline (37%), resilience to stress (36.3%), critical thinking (35.5%), teamwork skills (33.9%), strong civic engagement (32.6%), high motivation (28.8%), leadership abilities (28.7%), adaptability (25.1%), straightforwardness (20.7%), emotional stability (19%), independence in decision-making (18.5%), and diligence (16.8%).

Approximately 10% of respondents mentioned each of these traits: conscientiousness, lawfulness, commitment to service, and toughness. About 5% also noted a propensity for violence. Around 4% of respondents found it challenging to answer this question, and 1.6% chose the response "none of the above."

Additionally, veterans and military personnel had the opportunity to provide their own responses, such as intolerance of insincerity and enemies of Ukraine, crisis management and decision-making "in the trenches," apathy and a lack of understanding of superiors, toughness and the ability to withstand bullying, apathy and indifference, aggressiveness, tolerance toward people with diverse interests, social backgrounds, and moral values, speaking candidly without veils, improved patience, and reduced amazement at anything, and a reduced inclination to love people after having been in command.

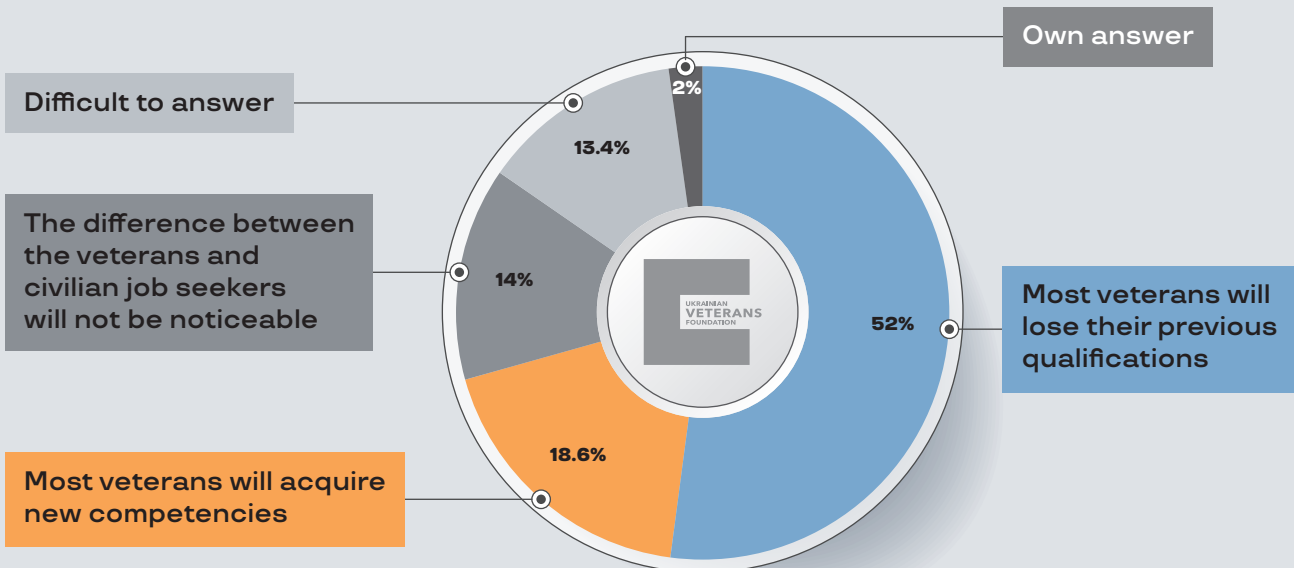
### What personal qualities or traits do you observe/have you observed in yourself during your service? up to 3 answer options



Contemplating whether **the aforementioned personal changes during their service will contribute to the employment of veterans in civilian life**, the respondents' answers varied. Specifically, 22.3% of those surveyed believe that the personal changes during their service will rather support their employment in civilian life, while 20.8% believe they will unequivocally support it. According to 20.7% of the respondents, these changes will be insignificant when it comes to civilian employment. In contrast, 15.9% of respondents think that the personal changes during their service will not favor their employment in civilian life, while 7.6% believe they will definitely not favor it. Furthermore, 12.8% of respondents were unable to provide a clear answer to this question.

At the same time, 52% of the surveyed veterans and military personnel believe that after demobilization, most veterans will lose their previous qualifications and will require additional training **compared to civilian job seekers**. In contrast, 18.6% of the respondents think that most veterans will acquire new competencies during military service that will be valuable in the job market, while another 14% believe that the difference in competency levels between veterans and civilian job seekers will not be significant. 13.4% of the respondents found it difficult to answer this question. Approximately 2% of the respondents expressed their own opinions on the level of competencies of veterans after demobilization compared to civilian job seekers. For example: "Veterans will have a hard time adapting to civilian life; they will need to reorient, and assistance will be required"; "A significant portion will not want to return to their previous jobs"; "Despite new skills and qualities gained during service, the forced detachment from professional development and trends will poorly affect veterans' competitiveness, so additional training programs for veterans are necessary"; "Considering previous years, after participating in the ATO, most veterans could not return to their previous jobs or left them altogether. The situation will remain unchanged, or they will explore new sources of funding (which will differ from what they did before the war), or after some time, they will consider returning to the Armed Forces as a place where they will feel comfortable"; "Generalizations don't work here; it will all depend on the individual veteran and their own efforts in terms of competency improvement"; "Employers will be afraid to hire veterans, regardless of their competence (several years minimum)"; "Given the current reality, this will be an incredibly significant problem and a labor market collapse after the war"; "No one will need us"; "After what we've been through, not fit for civilian life"; "Veterans will be psychologically 'sensitive' to any manifestations of injustice."

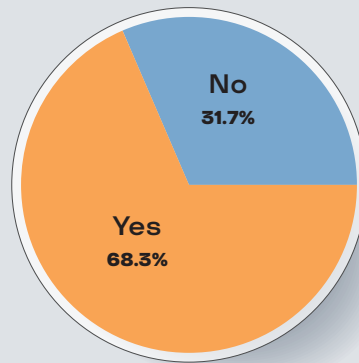
## What do you think will be the skill level of veterans after demobilization compared to civilian job seekers?



## Veterans with the status of Combat Veterans or disabled veterans as a result of the war who are not currently in active service

In this section of the survey, the questions were exclusively addressed to veterans who have the status of combatants or disabled veterans as a result of the war and are not currently in active service. The number of surveyed veterans in this section is 120 individuals, which accounts for 15.2% of all survey participants. The majority of respondents among combatants and disabled veterans who are not currently in active service (68.4%) had experience with official employment after obtaining their status. About one-third (31.7%) did not.

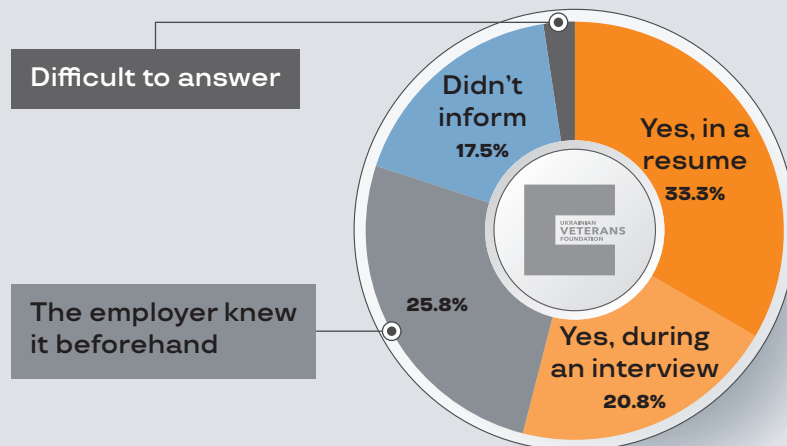
### Did you have the experience of formal employment education after receiving the status of a combatant?



Additionally, the absolute majority of this group of respondents (55.8%) did not reach out to state employment centers for job placement after obtaining the status of combatant. One-third contacted these centers but were not able to secure employment. Among those with the status of combatants who are not in active service, 5.8% sought assistance and successfully found jobs, while 2.5% sought assistance and underwent requalification. Approximately 1% provided responses such as "I found a job on my own," "I am on maternity leave, currently out of the workforce," and "denied the 'job seeker' status."

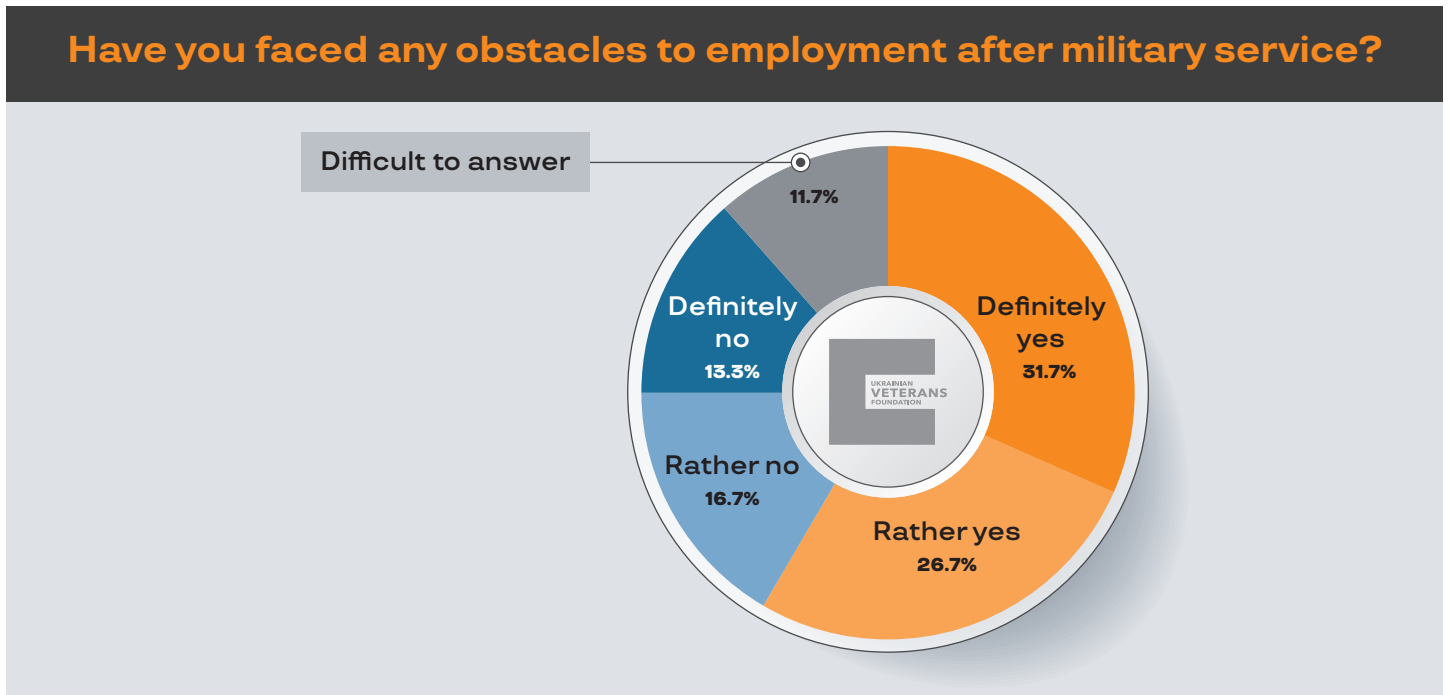
Responding to the question "**Did you inform your employer about your status and military experience during job placement?**", one-third of the respondents stated that they included this information in their resumes, while approximately a quarter informed their employers during the interview. In 20.8% of cases, the employer was already aware of their status and military experience. However, 17.5% did not disclose this information, and 2.5% found it difficult to provide an answer to this question.

### Did you report your status and military experience when hiring?



Among the reasons **veterans did not inform their employers about their status and military experience**, respondents mentioned the fear of being denied employment (14.2%). Meanwhile, 12.5% believe that their status and military experience should not influence the employment process. 10.8% of surveyed veterans kept their information hidden to avoid special attention, and 3.3% did not want pity. Another 2.5% omitted their experience to avoid conflicts of interest, and 1.7% of surveyed veterans were embarrassed by their preferential status during job placement. However, 48.3% of the respondents stated that they did not have such an experience of concealing their status.

31.7% of respondents definitely encountered obstacles in finding employment after their military service, and 26.7% rather faced such obstacles. 16.7% of those surveyed believe that they rather did not encounter such obstacles, and only 13.3% had no obstacles in finding employment. 11.7% found it difficult to answer.



Among the respondents who encountered obstacles in the recruitment process after their military service, the **most common barriers** were problems with physical health (28.3%), their own psychoemotional state (25.8%), loss of skills during their military service (17.5%), and high competition (15%). Other barriers included a lack of experience (12.5%), limited mobility (10%), and a lack of knowledge (7.5%). 10.8% of respondents found it difficult to determine the obstacles they faced, while 22.5% did not have such an experience. Respondents were given the option to provide their own answers, and some mentioned obstacles such as "fear of hiring a veteran, not knowing how to communicate with me," "very hostile attitudes from civilians! They all survive in the workplace," "veterans are reluctantly employed," "in practice, veterans become unnecessary after demobilization. The legislation does not protect them," "the general environment does not want to see veterans as part of the workforce," "negative attitudes, humiliation," "ageism, sexism," "the employer did not want to hire me because he considered me an unreliable employee."

The surveyed veterans had the opportunity to provide detailed responses to the question, "Did you return to your previous job after demobilization? If not, please indicate the reasons." 120 survey participants provided responses, which were summarized and categorized as follows:

1. Returned to their previous job after demobilization - 10.8%.
2. Did not return due to health issues/disability - 12.5%.
3. Did not return due to loss of interest, motivation, change in priorities - 10%.
4. Did not return. Employers terminated employment during service - 6.6%.
5. Did not return. Previous workplace ceased to exist/reorganized/moved - 5.8%.
6. Did not return. Resigned voluntarily during/before/after service. Were unemployed - 5.8%.



## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

7. Did not return due to relocation - 3.3%.
8. Returned to the ranks of the armed forces - 2.5%.
9. Did not return due to family circumstances - 2.5%.
10. Other - 4.2%.

In response to the question, "**Have you attended any qualification improvement courses after demobilization?**" the majority of respondents answered negatively (55%). Among them, 35% have experienced such courses. 6.7% did not attend such courses, and 3.3% chose "difficult to answer."

Respondents who attended **qualification improvement courses after demobilization**, when asked about their effectiveness, stated that such courses were effective (15%) or rather agreed with this (10.8%). Some of the surveyed individuals responded that such courses were definitely not effective (6.7%) or rather ineffective (14.2%). 7.5% of respondents found it difficult to determine, and 45.8% had no such experience at all.

A portion of the respondents did not change their **field of employment after demobilization (36.7%)**. At the same time, 24.2% changed their field of employment, 9.2% indicated that they changed their qualification, and 19.2% changed both their field of employment and qualification. 10.8% of the respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

The respondents' experiences regarding returning to the question of **further employment** vary. Some of the respondents returned to this question within the first two weeks after demobilization (20.8%). Within 2-3 months, 16.7% of those surveyed revisited this question, and after six months and after a year or more, the same percentage, about 13.3%, did so. Approximately 12% (11.7%) did it within a month, and 10% revisited it after a month. 5% of the respondents returned to employment more than six months later. 9.2% found it difficult to determine.

At the top position of their **employment after demobilization**, almost half of the respondents worked for more than a year (43.3%). 22.5% had this work experience for up to 3 months, while 20.8% had it for six months to a year. 13.3% of those surveyed worked in the top position for their jobs from 3 months to six months.

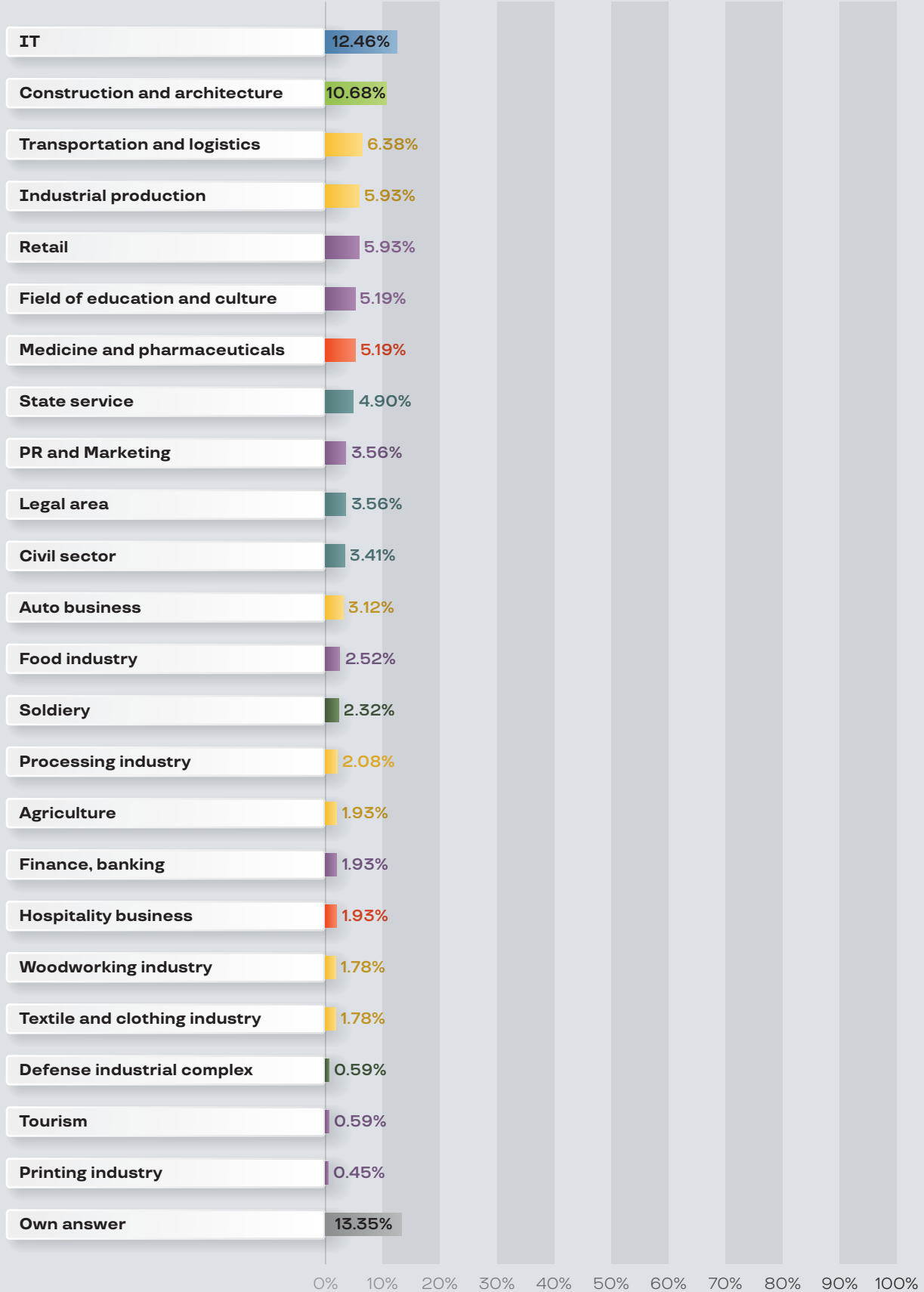
In response to the question, "**Did you need an adaptation period before returning to work or finding employment after your service?**" the majority of respondents answered affirmatively (65.8%). 25.8% indicated that they did not need an adaptation period, while 8.3% found it difficult to answer this question.

Among the **respondents who were mobilized** during the full-scale invasion (674 responses), 79.38% **were employed at the time of mobilization**, while 20.62% were not.

**Before mobilization, the respondents worked in various fields**, including IT (12.46%), construction and architecture (10.68%), transportation and logistics (6.38%), retail trade (5.93%), industrial production (5.93%), education and culture (5.19%), public service (4.9%), medicine and pharmaceuticals (5.19%), the legal field (3.56%), the public sector (3.41%), PR and marketing (3.56%), the military (2.23%), the automotive industry (3.12%), the food industry (2.52%), finance and banking (1.93%), the hotel and restaurant business (1.93%), the processing industry (2.08%), agriculture (1.93%), the wood processing industry (1.78%), the defense industry (0.59%), the textile and sewing industry (0.59%), tourism (0.45%), and the printing industry (0.3%).

Other areas of activity among the respondents, which accounted for less than 13.35%, include energy, journalism, civil aviation, the sports sector, security, media, scientific institutions, repair and maintenance of office equipment, sociology, entrepreneurship, telecommunications and internet, real estate sales, the service sector, psychology, telemarketing, translation, maritime affairs, wholesale trade in agricultural parts, consulting, film production, railways, local government, sports club networks, social services, metalworking, production of water transport vehicles, the political field, mass media, and others.

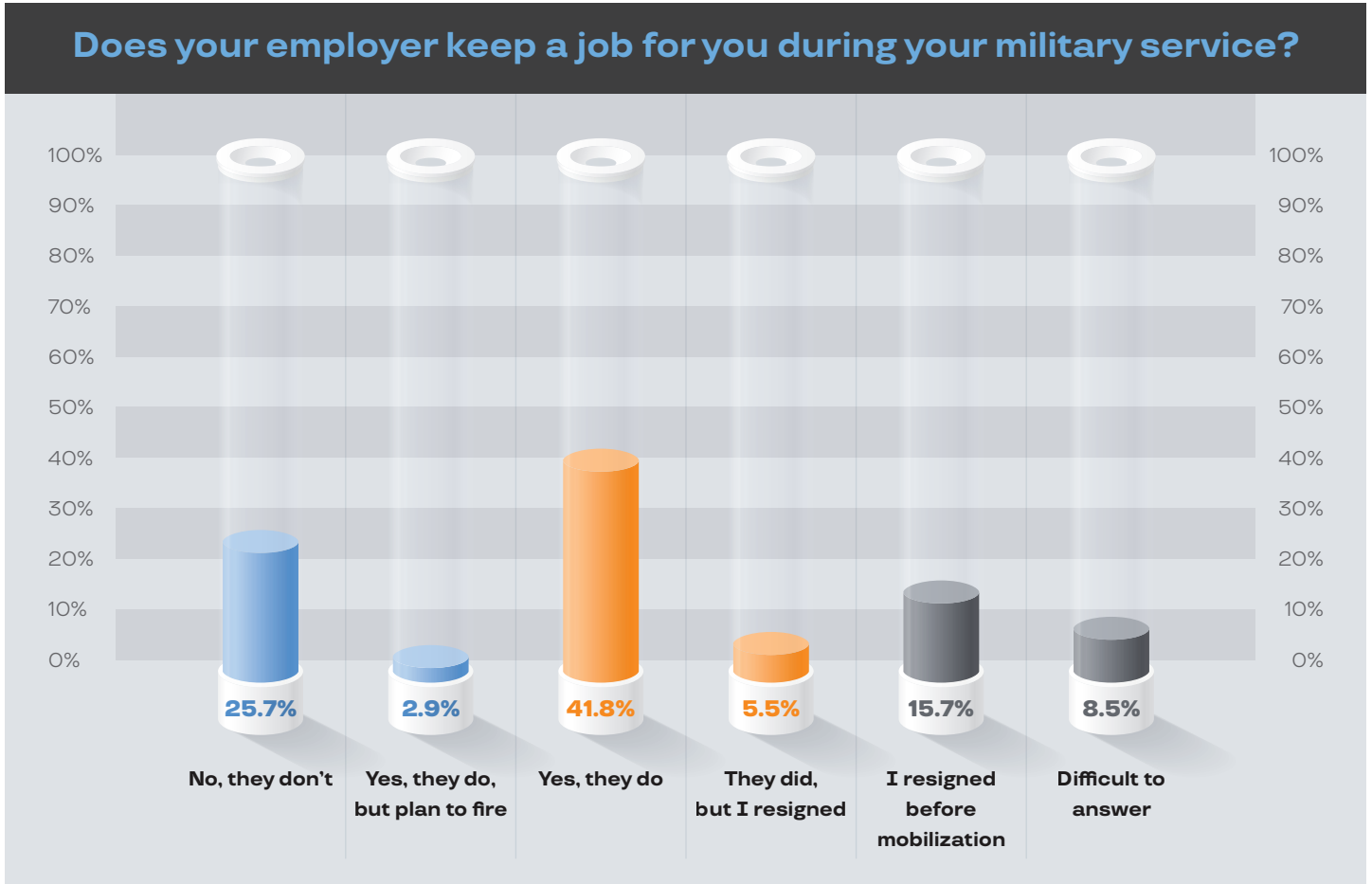
## What sector of activity did the company you worked for before mobilization belong to?



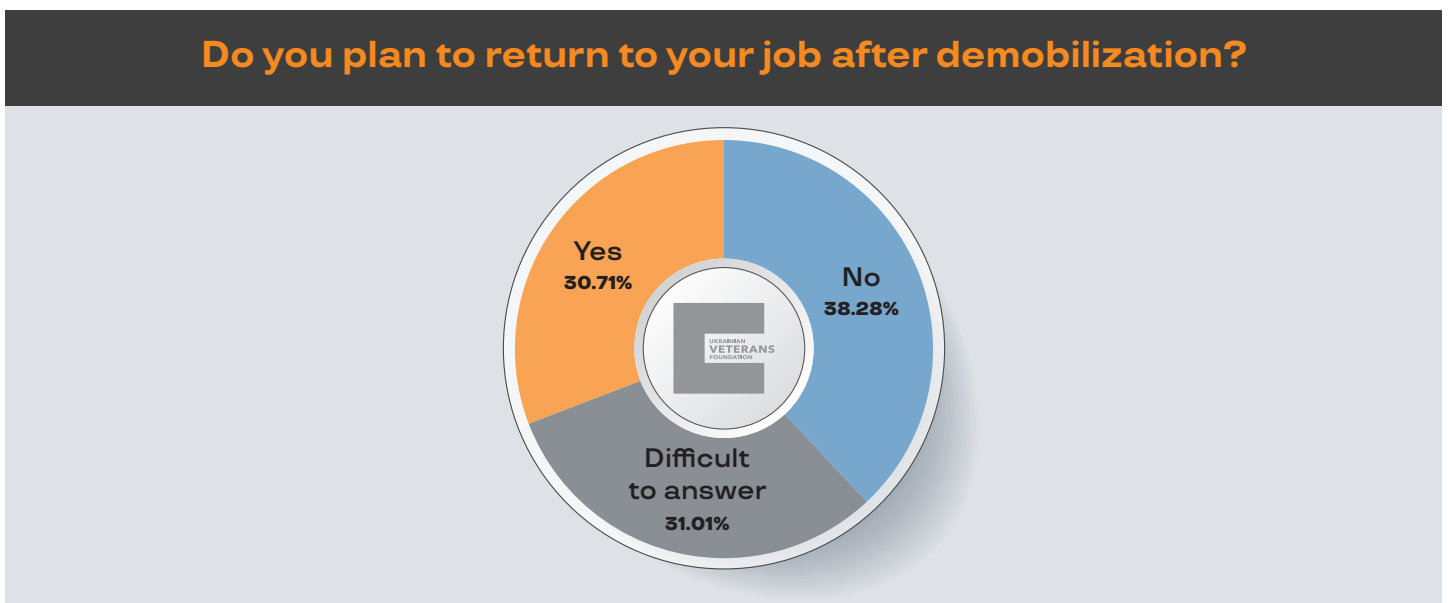
## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

At the same time, 41.84% of the mobilized respondents during the full-scale invasion stated that their employer keeps their job during military service. Meanwhile, a quarter (25.67%) of the respondents indicated that their employer does not hold their job for them.

15.73% of the respondents resigned before mobilization, 5.49% stated that the employer kept their job, but they still resigned, and another 2.82% mentioned that the employer maintains the position but plans to dismiss them. It was difficult for 8.46% of the respondents to provide a precise answer to this question.



In addition, the mobilized individuals also do not reach a consensus regarding their **return to their jobs after demobilization**. 38.28% of the respondents do not plan to return, while 30.71% do plan to return. Another third of the respondents could not provide a definite answer to this question.



The surveyed veterans and military personnel had the opportunity to openly state the reason they do not plan to return to their job after demobilization. In total, 231 individuals provided reasons, and their responses were categorized into subgroups.

Therefore, the reasons for not returning to their job after demobilization for the surveyed individuals include:

1. Loss of trust, reputation, and deteriorating relationships with colleagues/management at the previous workplace (12.12%).
2. Position was filled/occupied (12.12%).
3. Desire for a career change/finding something better/moving forward (9.96%).
4. Loss of interest/unwillingness to return (9.96%).
5. Desire to open/develop their own business/already have their own business (8.86%).
6. Personal changes (7.36%).
7. Previous workplace no longer physically exists/company has been liquidated (6.93%).
8. Inadequate/non-competitive salary (6.93%).
9. Physical and psychological condition/health/disability (5.19%).
10. Desire to continue service/associate life with the defense sector (3.03%).
11. Change in priorities (2.6%).
12. Living abroad/moving (2.6%).
13. Loss of skills, client base, opportunities (2.6%).
14. Uncertainty due to the war (1.73%).
15. Was not employed (1.3%).
16. Other (6.93%).

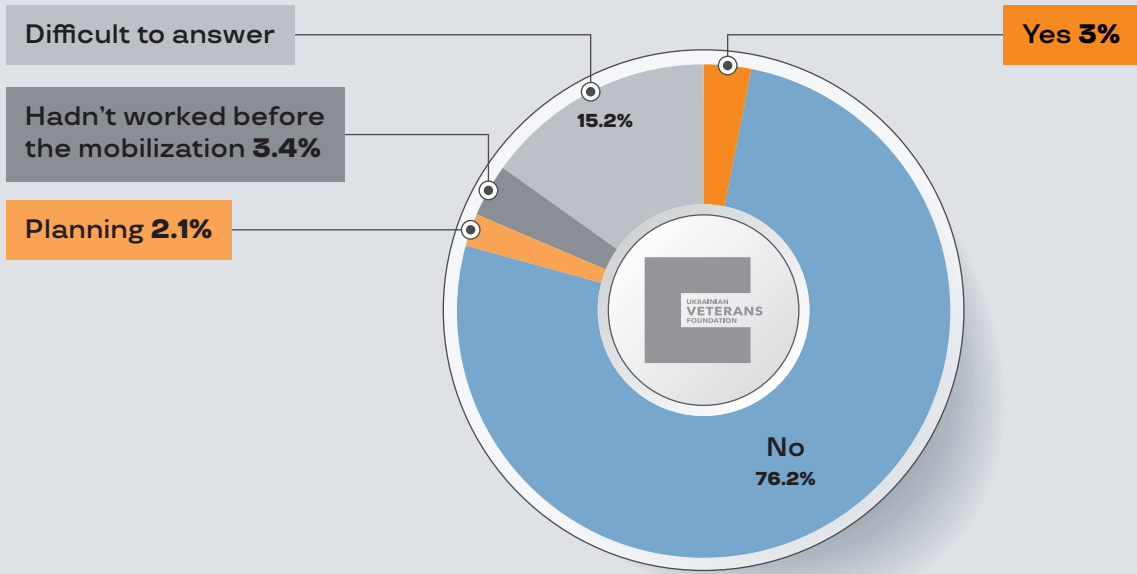
## Support of veterans by employers

As part of this study, veterans and servicemen were given the opportunity to express what kind of support they need in terms of employment, especially from employers. Responding to the question "What support do veterans need most in employment now or in the future?" the surveyed veterans and servicemen pointed to: retraining (53.3%); acquiring additional education (48.2%); extending the adaptation period (39.8%); adaptation training (35.8%); career counseling (32.5%); the ability to have flexible working hours (28.5%); mentoring (17.5%); coaching and consultations (14.1%); resume writing/interview preparation (13.7%). Participants in the survey also had the opportunity to add their own response, including: assistance in writing a business plan, help in starting a business (support); organizing communities, the opportunity to meet and share with like-minded people; employer adaptation training; support in employment; availability of preferential positions that are guaranteed; integration of individuals with disabilities; considering military experience in job expertise; creating a job search website for veterans; English courses, psychological support (mentioned multiple times).

One of the respondents expressed the following opinion: "Open information about the management of enterprises, institutions, organizations. Open information about the attitude of the management to the workforce, simply to the people. So that when returning from military service, a person sees that their service was not in vain for the Ukrainian people and that there are already positive changes in terms of moral-ethical values."

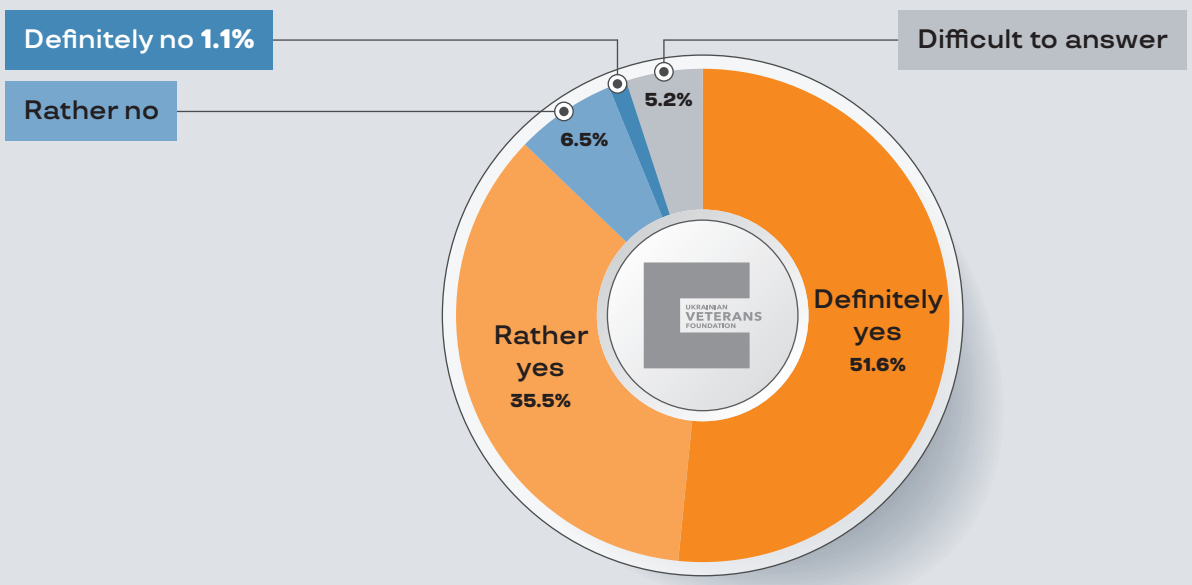
Based on the survey results, adaptation measures and the designated adaptation period are well-received among the surveyed veterans and servicemen. However, 76.2% of respondents reported that their company/previous place of employment **did not implement programs/measures for the adaptation of employees with combatant status**. 15.2% were unable to provide a clear answer regarding such an experience. 3.4% did not work before mobilization and thus cannot speak to relevant experience. On the other hand, 3% of respondents gave an affirmative response, while an additional 2.1% indicated that their companies plan to implement programs/measures for the adaptation of employees with combatant status.

**Did your company/previous place of work implement a program/activities for the adaptation of employees who have the status of a participant in hostilities?**



The absolute majority (51.6%) of surveyed veterans and servicemen believe that they and employees who were mobilized will need an adaptation program in the future. Additionally, 35.5% are inclined to think that such programs will be necessary. On the other hand, 6.5% believe that adaptation programs are less likely to be needed, while 1.1% responded with "definitely not." For 5.2%, it was challenging to provide a response to this question.

**Do you think you and the workers who were mobilized need an adaptation program in the future?**



Regarding the specific stage at which employers should plan further adaptation for employees who were mobilized, opinions among respondents were divided. 34.1% of surveyed veterans and servicemen believe that planning further adaptation should begin upon the return of mobilized employees, as a result of injury or demobilization. On the other hand, another third of respondents (31.2%) think that adaptation should

be planned from the beginning of the employee's mobilization, 16.8% believe that adaptation should be planned before the demobilization of employees, and 8.6% are of the opinion that it should be planned after general demobilization. However, 9.3% of respondents couldn't provide a clear answer to this question.

In response to the question "**How can the employer support your productivity after your return to work or after hiring you as a new employee?**" respondents, for the most part, highlighted the following response options: providing career development opportunities within the company (62%) and additional training (56.3%). Additionally, about a third of them noted flexible working hours (32.6%), mentoring (28.5%), and extended internship, which received the least support among respondents - 16%.

At the same time, 9.6% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question, and 5.8% chose "none of the above" as their response. Through their own response options, respondents emphasized various methods that would motivate and contribute to their development within the company, assistance in resolving social and household issues (e.g., family medical insurance, housing support, etc.), team adaptation, having a mentor from their ranks, guaranteed working conditions and pay, additional time off (due to a lack of days off, except for vacations, throughout their entire service period), respect and humane treatment, and the freedom to make decisions within their scope of responsibility.

## Support of veterans in employment by the state and society

In this section of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to assess the state's support for veterans in terms of employment and indicate their own needs and measures that the state and society can take to facilitate the recovery and career development of veterans in civilian life.

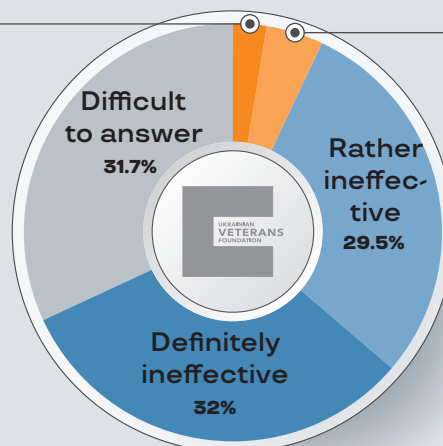
It is worth noting that the absolute majority (57.1%) of the surveyed veterans and military personnel did not turn to **state employment centers**, while 41.6% of the respondents have such experience, and an additional 1.4% plan to seek state employment services.

Speaking about the **existing state support for veterans in the field of employment**, the respondents mainly gave a negative assessment of its effectiveness. Approximately one-third (32%) of the surveyed veterans and military personnel indicated that the existing support is unequivocally ineffective, while another 29.5% stated that it is rather ineffective. In contrast, only 2.4% of respondents consider state support for veterans in employment to be unequivocally effective, and 4.4% find it rather effective. For 31.7% of the respondents, it was difficult to provide a clear answer to this question.

### How do you assess the effectiveness of state support for veterans in the field of employment?

Definitely effective **2.4%**

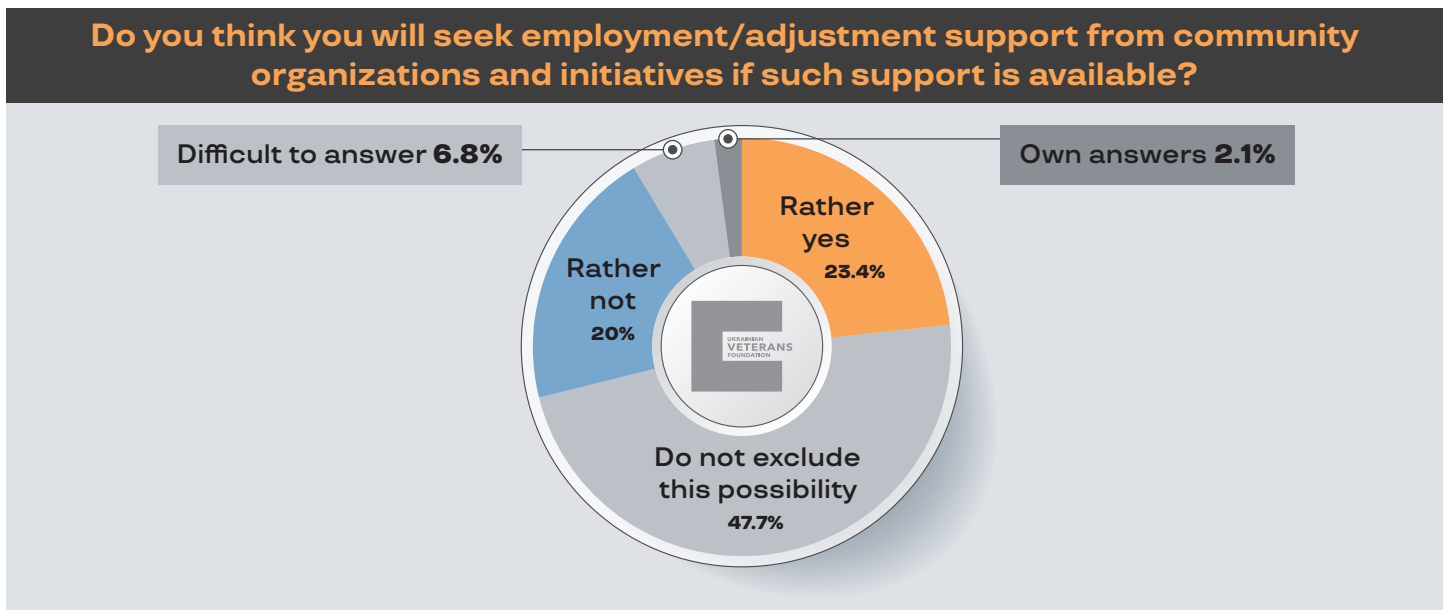
Rather effective **4.4%**



Responding to the question **"In your opinion, what measures should the state implement to encourage employers to hire veterans?"** respondents preferred the following answer options: tax incentives for employers (62%); benefits in state support programs for businesses that employ veterans (45.7%); retraining programs (44.6%); qualification improvement programs (42.3%); psychological support and adaptation programs (41.4%); legally mandated quotas (28.7%); improving the work of Employment Centers (19.6%); and informational campaigns (18.4%). 4.5% of respondents could not provide a clear answer to this question. Respondents also had the opportunity to provide their own answer options, including: assistance in establishing effective veterans' associations; grant projects to support veteran-owned businesses and accessible preferential loans for starting a business; the need to improve the work of Employment Centers (as mentioned by several respondents); targeted support tailored to the situation of each veteran; holding employers accountable for refusing to hire people with disabilities; and the need for penalties against discrimination.

According to the surveyed veterans and military personnel, **civil society can help veterans find employment** through veterans' public centers (68.8%); using public employment platforms (50.1%); conducting adaptation training (47.9%), career guidance events (41.3%), free coaching consultations (32.6%), and job fairs (26.2%). When providing their own answers, respondents mentioned quotas, respect for veterans (to avoid repeating the situation with ATO veterans), monitoring the effectiveness of existing tools, public discussion of veterans' issues, psychological adaptation support, developing step-by-step instructions for veterans, assistance in integrating people with disabilities, educational missions to improve attitudes towards veterans, a website dedicated to employing veterans, grants for higher education (including overseas), grants for businesses, promoting changes that support labor market development (in both the private and public sectors).

Furthermore, the majority of surveyed veterans and military personnel (47.7%) do not rule out the possibility of **seeking support in employment or adaptation from civil organizations** and initiatives if such support becomes available. Additionally, 23.4% of respondents indicated that they would rather turn to civil organizations for support. In contrast, 20% stated that they would rather not seek support from the civil sector, and 6.8% found it difficult to answer this question. Participants in the survey also had the opportunity to provide their own response, expressing thoughts such as: "I currently don't have such a need, but if it arises, then of course," "I don't like how the Employment Center operates. They are rude and unhelpful," "I don't rule out the possibility, but it depends on the duration of the war, whether I will be alive and uninjured when the war ends, and whether staying in the military will be an interesting option for me."





In summary, it can be concluded that a significant portion of the responses from veterans and military personnel express uncertainty. Veterans who gained combat experience and corresponding status prior to the full-scale invasion exhibit some distrust towards employers and potential employment support. Among those mobilized during the full-scale invasion, there is a tendency to distance themselves from their previous workplaces due to changes in worldviews, priorities, interests, and personal capabilities.

Based on the survey results, it is evident that the assessment of their own psychological and physical well-being, personal changes, and aspirations already influence the confidence of veterans on their path to employment. Simultaneously, the responses received from employers, veterans, and military personnel allow for a comparison of the perceptions of both sides regarding the needs and obstacles in employing individuals with experience in armed conflicts, aiming to identify the most sought-after solutions and overcome existing barriers.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Having conducted a comprehensive study of the needs and barriers faced by veterans in employment, the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation, in collaboration with LobbyX and Work.ua platforms and with the involvement of the military and veteran community, has identified common ground and divergences that already have or may impact the employment and adaptation processes of veterans in civilian life. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of surveyed employers consider it necessary to foster and develop a culture of respect for veterans in the labor market and society as a whole. They have expressed their willingness to invest in various aspects of personal recovery and development for members of the veteran community.

Despite the overall lack of experience in recruiting veterans and minimal instances of negative experiences in working with veterans, according to 10.7% of surveyed employers, one of the characteristic traits of veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war is emotional instability. Among the positive traits that also characterize veterans, employers overwhelmingly mentioned a strong civic position, discipline, straightforwardness, stress resilience, responsibility, and hard work. These positive traits are often noticed by employers during military service. On the other hand, emotional instability is not as pronounced. Veterans have varying opinions on how these acquired traits and personal changes will affect their future employment, and nearly half of them agreed that these changes would more likely contribute to it.

**The main concerns and risks that employers may face when hiring veterans** revolve around the impact of their psychosocial and physical well-being on work processes and interactions within the team. Both employers during in-depth interviews and a majority of veterans themselves share the view that health issues (28.3%) and psychosocial well-being (25.8%) are common barriers to the employment process. Although, in practice, these concerns and risks are seldom confirmed, the perception of an unstable psychosocial state can influence the consideration of a veteran as a job candidate. At the same time, over 30% of employers expressed a positive or rather positive impact of a veteran on internal communication within the team.

None of the surveyed groups seem to have a clearly defined **understanding of the impact of war on competencies and skills**. However, surveyed veterans and military personnel perceive the loss of their competencies and skills, as well as the high competition in the job market, as significant barriers to employment. More so than employers, they emphasize the need for additional education and requalification. According to 52% of

## Needs and obstacles of veterans in employment

surveyed veterans and military personnel, most veterans will lose their previous qualifications after demobilization and will require further education compared to civilian job seekers. Employers have varying opinions on this matter.

According to the survey results, **the absolute majority of employers learn about military experience and veteran status during the interview. Although a significant portion of employers (37.8%) remains neutral when candidates hide their military experience, a larger percentage (43%) views such concealment negatively. Only 17.5% of veterans who are not currently serving reported that they did not disclose their status and military experience to employers.** These findings can be related to the aforementioned concerns and risks in the employment of veterans. Based on the gathered information, employers seem to prioritize preparing themselves and their teams for collaboration with veterans rather than considering their needs within the work environment. The fear of being refused employment (14.2%) remains **one of the reasons why veterans do not disclose their status and military experience.** In addition, veterans expressed the opinion that having such experience should not impact their employability (12.5%).

Speaking of the support that employers can provide when employing veterans, it's worth noting that, **according to surveyed employers, veterans will require the most support in employment in the following areas now and in the future:** extending the adaptation period (21.31%); adaptation training (20.46%); requalification (14.26%); vocational guidance courses (11.63%). **From the perspective of the most common responses, additional support in the form of requalification opportunities and acquiring additional education is more significant for most surveyed veterans than additional adaptation conditions, which employers give greater importance to.**

Around 60% of surveyed employers currently have mobilized workers in their staff, and while most companies/organizations do not have adaptation programs in place, the majority of employers consider adaptation measures and programs necessary for future work with mobilized workers and veterans in general. Furthermore, an absolute majority (51.6%) of surveyed veterans and military personnel believe that they and mobilized employees will need an adaptation program in the future.

In-depth interviews with employers also revealed that adaptation measures are critically important not only for employing veterans but also for working with the collective and managing their interactions with them. **Therefore, the introduction of specific policies, adaptation programs, and measures for employees with combat experience can help not only veterans feel more comfortable in the workplace but also create an understanding of veterans' needs and experiences in society, fostering an uninvolved perception of veterans as employees.** However, there are discrepancies regarding when employers should begin to provide support and adaptation for mobilized workers. Only a quarter of surveyed employers believe that it should start from the beginning of the employee's mobilization, while for all others, adaptation questions arise directly before and after the employee's demobilization.

Returning to the fact that most employers **have not had experience working with veterans**, there is an understanding that gaining such experience will become quite common among employers who have mobilized employees.

When it comes to **the skills of veterans that can contribute to their employment** and career development, employers highlighted teamwork skills, critical thinking, responsible leadership, driving and technical skills, computer systems and software expertise, engineering and construction skills, as well as logistics skills.

Therefore, it can be concluded that some of the **skills acquired by veterans during their service can make them promising candidates in the civilian job market because there is demand for these skills from employers. In particular, skills such as driving and technical proficiency, computer systems and software expertise, engineering, construction, and logistics skills are held by the majority of surveyed veterans, making them relevant candidates for employment today.**

Surveyed employers, on their part, are willing to provide internships and mentorship support to candidates without experience, including veterans. They are also open to offering part-time employment conditions and additional educational courses. However, prioritizing veterans without experience in the selection process does not find strong support among employers. Having experience, even if minimal, remains an important factor in the employment of veterans, especially where "soft skills" are more significant.

**Support for employers from both the government and society regarding the employment of veterans**, according to the respondents, should primarily address the physical and psychological recovery needs of veterans, and subsequently, their educational needs and retraining. Furthermore, the majority of surveyed veterans not currently in service (65.8%) stated that they need an adaptation period before returning to work or seeking employment. By taking responsibility for the employability of veterans, the government can provide them with opportunities for employment and career development that align with the interests of employers.

Even the options outlined in the survey, such as tax incentives, informational campaigns, preferential loans, etc., do not diminish the importance of the emotional and physical readiness of veterans for civilian employment, which should be developed during the recovery and adaptation phase. Employers are open to collaboration with the public sector to facilitate the employment of veterans, particularly to provide adaptation and psychological support for demobilized veterans.

On the other hand, the surveyed veterans predominantly view government support for employment as ineffective, with the vast majority having had no successful experience working with government employment centers. As a result, lacking a sense of support from the government, significant importance is placed on the role of society in assisting veterans in finding employment. There is particular hope that employers will understand the self-sufficiency and development needs of veterans.

The research results indicate a noteworthy shift in perceptions about veterans in the workplace. Employers who have experience hiring veterans recommend fostering an inclusive work environment where adaptation is a mutual process involving not only veterans but the entire team. They suggest avoiding idealization and the imposition of preferential conditions for veterans, as this can adversely affect their motivation and development. Instead, veterans should be seen as full and equal members of society, irrespective of the physical and psychological consequences of their combat experiences.

Employers with no prior experience in hiring veterans are showing an openness towards the veteran community. This is because a significant portion of this community comprises their mobilized employees. These employers feel a sense of responsibility for the conditions under which veterans will work in civilian life. Despite their own apprehensions, they are willing to work with veterans who lack employment experience. On the other hand, service members and veterans experience uncertainty and mistrust when transitioning to civilian life after demobilization. The experience of war significantly affects their self-perception, both as individuals and as professionals deserving of suitable working conditions and development. Veterans require special support in regaining their competencies, acquiring new ones, and recognizing the value of their combat experience as relevant to civilian employment.

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