

THE NEEDS OF VETERANS 2023



UKRAINIAN
VETERANS
FOUNDATION

January – April 2023



MINISTRY
OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS
OF UKRAINE



The needs of veterans 2023

The study was carried out by
the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation
of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine
in cooperation
with the sociological group "Rating"



Research group and co-authors:

Yuliia Kirillova – Head of the Department
of Educational and Analytical Work
of the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation

Vladyslava Znoviak – Leading Specialist
of the Department of Educational and
Analytical Work of the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation

Alyona Kazanska – Leading Specialist
of the Department of Educational and
Analytical Work of the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation

Marianna Tkalych – Doctor of Psychological Sciences, Professor,
sociological group "Rating"

CONTENT

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	4
CONCEPTUALIZATION	5
INTRODUCTION	8
METHODOLOGY	9
OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION	11
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE	15
Policies and practices of promoting the resocialization of veterans	16
Benefits for veterans in the health care system and peculiarities of their medical care in international practice	18
Material benefits for veterans in international practice	20
State support for veterans in the field of employment and self-employment: international experience	23
Conclusions	29
RESEARCH RESULTS	30
How do veterans understand self-respect?	32
The attitude of veterans to benefits in the health care system and their medical care	35
Opinions of veterans regarding their financial support and material benefits	42
Resocialization of veterans through employment in civilian life	50
The Attitude of Male and Female Veterans to the Membership of Brothers and Sisters in Arms in Various Political Movements	56
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	59
REFERENCES	65

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



- AR** – Autonomous Republic
- ATO** – Antiterrorist Operation
- MMC** – Military Medical Commission
- ARD** – Assistive Rehabilitation Devices
- AFU** – Armed Forces of Ukraine
- IVF** – In Vitro Fertilization
- MIA** – Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- MoVA** – The Ministry of Veterans Affairs
- MOD** – Ministry of Defense
- MOH** – Ministry of Health
- OOC** – Operation United Forces
- PTSD** – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- USA** – United States of America
- CBD** – Combatant
- NSDC** – National Security and Defense Council
- CAF** – Canadian Armed Forces
- VA** – Veterans Affairs (USA)
- VAC** – Veterans Affairs Canada
- PMI** – Private Mortgage Insurance
- SBA** – Small Business Administration

CONCEPTUALIZATION



Acoustic trauma – is a specific injury caused by the action of high-intensity sound accompanied by pressure changes (shockwave), resulting in damage to the structures of the auditory system (sound conduction apparatus, peripheral and central divisions of the auditory analyzer). It presents a complex of characteristic symptoms including acute pain and fullness in the ears, a sense of deafness, hearing loss, subjective tinnitus, headache, nausea, dizziness, and balance disturbances. It may also exhibit evident signs of middle ear involvement (ruptured tympanic membrane, damage to the ossicular chain, traumatic hydrops of the labyrinth, etc.).¹

Antiterrorist Operation (ATO) – Complex of military and special organizational and legal measures of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies aimed at countering the activities of illegal Russian and pro-Russian armed formations in the war in eastern Ukraine. Declared on April 13. It lasted from April 14, 2014, to April 30, 2018.

Annexation – is the forcible acquisition, seizure by one state of the entire (or part of) territory of another state or people.²

Veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war – In this study, the term "veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war" refers to individuals who, according to the Law of Ukraine "On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection," participated in the Russian-Ukrainian war and received the status of combatants under points 11, 19-22 of Article 6 (demining personnel, military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, National Guard of Ukraine, Security Service of Ukraine, Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine, State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, State Special Transport Service, military personnel of military prosecutor's offices, personnel of operational support units of the central executive authority conducting an anti-terrorist operation, volunteers), as well as individuals with disabilities as a result of the war who obtained the status according to points 10-15 of Part Two of Article 7 of this law.

Martial law – is a special legal regime that is introduced in Ukraine or in certain parts of its territory in the event of armed aggression or the threat of an attack, endangering the state independence of Ukraine, its territorial integrity. It involves granting the relevant state authorities, military command, military administrations, and local self-government bodies the necessary powers to avert threats, repel armed aggression, and ensure national security, eliminate threats to the state independence of Ukraine, and its territorial integrity. It also entails temporary limitations on constitutional rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens, as well as the rights and legitimate interests of legal entities, determined by the duration of these restrictions.³

Focus Group Interview – is a qualitative research method that involves a group interview organized as a conversation among several respondents, typically 6-12 individuals, on a specific topic guided by an interviewer-moderator.

¹ Features of functional recovery in servicemen after traumatic brain injury combined with blast injury [Online resource] // Zaporizhzhia Medical Journal. 2020. Vol. 22, No. 3(120). pp. 329-337. – Access mode: <http://zmj.zsmu.edu.ua/article/view/204905/206005>

² Annexation [Online resource] // Dictionary of foreign words. – Access mode: <https://www.jnsm.com.ua/cgi-bin/u/book/sis.pl?Qry=%CO%ED%E5%EA%F1%B3%FF>

³ Law of Ukraine "On the Legal Regime of Martial Law" [Online resource] // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. – 2015. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/389-19#Text>

The State Policy of Social Protection for War Veterans and Members of Their Families, Family Members of Deceased War Veterans, and Family Members of Deceased Defenders of Ukraine – is a purposeful and systematic activity of state authorities aimed at ensuring the social protection of war veterans and members of their families, family members of deceased war veterans, and family members of deceased defenders of Ukraine. This is achieved through the provision of privileges and guarantees of social protection in accordance with the legislation.

Assistive Rehabilitation Aids – technical and other means of rehabilitation provided to individuals with disabilities, children with disabilities, and other specific categories of the population. These aids include prosthetic and orthopedic devices, including orthopedic footwear, as well as special tools for self-care and personal hygiene.

In vitro fertilization – a method of artificial fertilization; a treatment method for infertility.

General mobilization – is an operational mechanism for replenishing the ranks of the Armed Forces, which is conducted simultaneously throughout the territory of Ukraine. It involves all branches of state power, other state bodies, local self-government bodies, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, other military formations, the bodies and forces of Civil Defense of Ukraine, sectors of the national economy, state and private enterprises, institutions, and organizations.⁴

Defenders of Ukraine – individuals who directly participated in operations to defend the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Inclusive space – a system of structural components (environments) in which interpersonal relationships are realized in an accessible format for each participant, providing opportunities for personal and social development, socialization, self-improvement, and more.

Comprehensive review of the system of social protection for war veterans and their families, families of deceased veterans, and families of fallen Defenders of Ukraine – is a procedure for assessing the current state of the system and the readiness of its components to fulfill the functional tasks of social protection for war veterans. Based on the results of the review, regulatory and legal acts are developed and refined regarding the development of the system of social protection for war veterans and its components. Measures are determined to be implemented by government bodies, enterprises, institutions, organizations, and other systems of public administration in order to shape and implement state policies in the field of social protection for war veterans and address current and anticipated issues.

Peacekeeping missions – are international actions or measures aimed at carrying out peacekeeping or humanitarian tasks, conducted in accordance with the decisions of the United Nations Security Council, as provided in the United Nations Charter, the OSCE, and other international organizations responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

Operation United Forces – was a comprehensive military and special organizational and legal measure conducted by Ukrainian security forces from April 30, 2018, to February 24, 2022. Its objective was to counter the activities of illegal Russian and pro-Russian armed formations in the war in eastern Ukraine.

Post-traumatic syndrome – a severe mental condition, a type of anxiety disorder (neurosis), which occurs as a result of a singular or repetitive psychologically traumatic situation.

⁴ What does general mobilization mean and who will be conscripted [Online resource] // АрміяINFORM – 2022 – Access mode: <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/02/24/shho-oznachaye-zagalna-mobilizacziya-ta-kogo-pryzyvatymut/>

Reintegration - the adaptation of individuals (or population of specific territories) who have found themselves in certain social, socio-political, socio-economic conditions that complicate or prevent their participation in the social life of the state as full-fledged members. It involves various forms of assistance, as prescribed by state regulations, in order to regain the individual's customary social status.⁵

Retraumatization - is the conscious or unconscious reminder of a past trauma, which leads to the reopening of old emotional wounds and the re-experiencing of the initial traumatic event.

Defense Forces of Ukraine - The Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as other military formations, law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and special-purpose bodies with law enforcement functions established in accordance with the laws of Ukraine, constitute the Defense Forces of Ukraine. They are entrusted with the functions of ensuring the defense of the state according to the Constitution and laws of Ukraine.⁶

Social structure – is the aggregate of social (class, labor collective, group, stratum), socio-demographic (youth, pensioners), professional-qualification, territorial (settlement type), and ethnic communities (nations, ethnicities) that are interconnected by relatively stable relationships.

Combatants - are individuals who took part in the execution of combat tasks to defend their homeland as part of military units, formations, associations of all branches and types of the Armed Forces of the active army (navy), in partisan detachments, underground movements, and other formations both in wartime and peacetime.⁷

⁵ Community reintegration // Webster's New World Law Dictionary. [Online resource]. – Access mode: <http://www.yourdictionary.com/dictionary-definitions/>

⁶ Law of Ukraine "On National Security of Ukraine" [Online resource] // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. – 2018. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2469-19#Text>

⁷ Law of Ukraine "On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection" [Online resource] // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. –1993.– Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3551-12#Text>

INTRODUCTION



On March 1, 2014, the Russian Federation's Federation Council, upon Putin's proposal, unanimously voted to deploy Russian troops to the territory of Ukraine and Crimea. On March 16, an illegal referendum and annexation of Crimea by Russia took place. On April 12, 2014, there was an unlawful seizure of state institutions and Ukrainian cities by Russian sabotage groups. On April 13, 2014, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (RNBO) launched a full-scale anti-terrorist operation involving the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to counter Russia's open armed aggression against Ukraine. On February 24, 2022, Russian forces invaded Ukraine near Kharkiv, Kherson, Chernihiv, and Sumy, entering from Russia, Belarus, and the temporarily occupied Crimea. On the same day, martial law was declared in Ukraine, and a general mobilization was announced.

Since then, defenders, both male and female, have joined the ranks of the Armed Forces, including demobilized veterans and those who had no prior military service experience before the full-scale invasion. As a result, the number of future veterans would increase several times over, and the social structure of the future veteran community would undergo a fundamental change. Consequently, the policies that were developed and implemented in Ukraine before February 24, 2022, may not meet the current needs of the new veterans, as they were designed to address the needs and demands of the period from 2014 to 2021. The target audience and the average profile of veterans and their needs have changed. This leads to socio-economic changes that need to be addressed by the state's veteran policy. In order to enhance the effectiveness of existing veteran policies in Ukraine and ensure the development of new support programs, it is necessary to take into account and understand the current needs and problems of veterans. This necessitates conducting comprehensive research on the needs of veterans and their experiences in the process of receiving state support in times of war.

In the summer of 2022, the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation conducted a comprehensive study of the veteran profile. The results allowed for the identification of the actual portrait of veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war as of February 23, 2022, and determined key differences between this image and the perceptions of veterans prevalent in Ukrainian society. The study also provided a preliminary exploration of the current needs of veterans.

The average veteran of the Russian-Ukrainian war, in the majority of cases, is a working-age man between 30 and 45 years old. He may represent any occupational background, but currently, he is either mobilized in the Armed Forces of Ukraine or engaged in volunteering. The number of women among veterans has been rapidly increasing in recent years. Currently, their representation constitutes approximately 9% of the total number of veterans.

It is crucial to further analyze the changing attitudes of Ukrainians towards veterans, the needs of veterans and their families, as well as the effectiveness of reintegration programs for veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In our research, we have addressed the current needs of veterans and examined their experiences with accessing and utilizing benefits. We have also explored how veterans and female veterans perceive existing opportunities and identify obstacles they encounter while accessing various benefits and services.

METHODOLOGY



The "Needs of Veterans" study was a continuation of the comprehensive "Veteran Profile" study conducted by the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation in the summer of 2022. The "Needs of Veterans" study was carried out from January to April 2023 and consisted of a desk research component and an empirical component. The desk research analyzed the current state policies on social protection of war veterans, including benefits in healthcare, education, financial support, taxation, employment, housing, and other areas.

The desk research also included an analysis of the best international policies in the field of social protection for veterans. The selected countries for international experience analysis were the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Croatia, and Australia.

The empirical component of the study consisted of the 20th nationwide survey conducted by the Rating sociological group titled "Perception of Veterans in Ukrainian Society," the second anonymous online survey conducted by the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation among veterans and active military personnel titled "Needs of Veterans," and focus group discussions among veterans conducted by the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation.

The 20th nationwide survey "Perception of Veterans in Ukrainian Society" targeted the population of Ukraine aged 18 and older in all regions, except for the temporarily occupied territories of Crimea and Donbas, as well as areas where Ukrainian mobile communication was unavailable at the time of the survey. The results were weighted using up-to-date data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. The sample was representative in terms of age, gender, and settlement type, with a total of 1000 respondents. The survey method used was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) utilizing randomly selected mobile phone numbers. The margin of sampling error for the representativeness of the study, with a confidence level of 0.95, was no more than 3.1%. The survey was conducted from January 14 to 16, 2023.

Online survey. The Ukrainian Veterans Foundation, under the Ministry of Veterans, conducted the second anonymous online survey among veterans and active military personnel. The survey took place from February 6 to 12, 2023, and aimed to collect primary data on the profile of our current and future target audience, as well as the most common challenges they face under the legal regime of martial law.

Considering the difficulty in accessing respondents, the chosen data collection tool was an anonymous online survey, and therefore, no sampling requirements were established. A total of 1,247 respondents participated in the survey. One potential risk associated with the chosen data collection method is the possibility of duplicate submissions aimed at influencing the survey results. Given the internal and external factors that led us to choose this tool, we cannot fully control such risks in the survey. Therefore, our survey is not representative, but it does reflect certain trends among our target audience.

The anonymous online survey consisted of 31 questions, including 21 closed-ended questions and 10 open-ended questions. The open-ended questions provided respondents with an opportunity to provide more in-depth responses regarding their professional occupation, the types of support they currently need the most, the types of benefits and social guarantees they are most satisfied or

dissatisfied with, instances where they were denied certain services, and the challenges they believe veterans commonly face.

The anonymous online survey is structured into 4 blocks:

Block 1: Social-demographic questions.

Block 2: Exclusive to veterans not currently serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Block 3: Exclusive to veterans and individuals mobilized after February 24, 2022, who are currently serving military personnel.

Block 4: Mandatory for all respondents - Questions about the level of respect for veterans in Ukrainian society.

Focus groups. On March 30, 2023, the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs conducted focus groups among veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war as part of the study "Veteran Portrait. Block "Veterans' Needs". The aim of the focus group research was to identify the factors that cause problems and obstacles for veterans during the receipt of social services and to determine how veterans perceive the respect for them through the quality of these services.

To achieve this goal, we formulated the following tasks:

- identify key problems and obstacles that veterans encounter when receiving services in areas such as medical care, entitlements and benefits, and employment;
- formulate an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the state policy supporting veterans in Ukraine based on the opinions of focus group participants;
- determine how combat participants perceive respect towards them as veterans and identify manifestations of respect and disrespect in Ukrainian society today;
- identify topics and questions that may give rise to internal social conflicts and contradictions involving veterans;
- characterize the potential of veterans' political activities in Ukraine, including advantages and disadvantages of their involvement in electoral processes.

Hypotheses:

- veterans of the war in Ukraine face manifestations of disrespect during the process of receiving preferential services;
- veterans lack information about benefits in the healthcare system, particularly regarding state programs for physical, psychological rehabilitation, and prosthetics;
- one of the most pressing needs of veterans is financial assistance to their families;
- one of the major obstacles to meeting veterans' needs is bureaucracy at the local level of executive authorities;
- the majority of veterans negatively evaluate the effectiveness of the state policy supporting veterans;
- one possible negative consequence of involving veterans in electoral processes by different political forces is the compromise of the veteran's image in the perception of Ukrainian society.

During the research, two focus groups were conducted: a group of male veterans and a group of female veterans. Each group consisted of 6 respondents selected based on the following criteria: military service or participation in combat operations, status of a war veteran or a person with disabilities due to combat actions, and experience in receiving social services and benefits.

UKRAINIAN
VETERANS
FOUNDATION

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION



With the onset of full-scale invasion, the majority of demobilized veterans have returned to military service. However, an increased burden on the government bodies responsible for the social support of veterans is expected due to the growing number of individuals with the status of combat participants or persons with disabilities as a result of the war. As of July 1, 2022, there were 438,834 combat participants in Ukraine.⁸ According to the statement of the Minister for Veterans Affairs, the number of veterans, their family members, and the family members of deceased military personnel may increase to 4-5 million people.⁹ The State Veteran Policy (State Policy of Social Protection of Veterans of War) is comprehensive and includes various benefits in the healthcare system, financial support and taxation, education system, employment sector, as well as housing and other privileges.

The benefits in the healthcare system include the restoration of physical and mental health for veterans and encompass psychological rehabilitation, physical rehabilitation, prosthetics, sanatorium-resort treatment, and free provision of medications. The provision of benefits in this field is regulated by numerous legal acts and ensured by various state bodies within the system of central executive authorities. The "State Target Program for Medical, Physical Rehabilitation, and Psychosocial Rehabilitation" is set to be completed in 2023...¹⁰ (next - the program), coordinated by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, involves various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and others. The program encompasses providing veterans with services in psychological rehabilitation, medical and physical rehabilitation, and measures for professional reintegration aimed at stimulating participants' opportunities, including professional training, retraining, and skills enhancement. An essential component of program implementation was the analytical and methodological support for rehabilitation and reintegration, including the development and implementation of service delivery standards. One of the stages of restoring the psycho-physiological state and reintegration of veterans was the introduction of decompression. According to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, the implementation of the program without a systematic approach to providing psychological assistance to the target group as a complex set of services in the field of mental health and psychosocial support, based on the principle of multilevel and step-by-step approach, did not achieve the expected result.¹¹

Therefore, in the fall of 2022, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs proposed improving the state regulation of providing psychological assistance to veterans by adopting a resolution by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The resolution aimed to address certain issues related to the provision of free psychological assistance to individuals who are being discharged or have been discharged from military service among war veterans, individuals who have special merits to the country, members of their families, as well as members of families of deceased veterans and members of families of deceased Defenders of Ukraine in accordance with the Law of Ukraine "On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection."¹²

The Ministry of Veterans Affairs, as the main administrator of budgetary funds, is responsible for providing psychological rehabilitation services to veterans.¹³ The provision of psychological

⁸ Analytical study "Portrait of a Veteran of the Russian-Ukrainian War 2014-2022" [Online resource] // Ukrainian Veterans Foundation. – Access mode: https://veteranfund.com.ua/opportunity/portret_veterana

⁹ The number of veterans and family members of the deceased may increase to 5 million after the war – Ministry of Veterans Affairs [Online resource] // Hromadske Telebachennya.. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://hromadske.ua/posts/kilkist-veteraniv-ta-chleniv-simej-zagiblih-mozhe-zrosti-do-5-mln-pislya-vijni-minveteraniv>

¹⁰ Resolution of December 5, 2018, No. 1021 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2018. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1021-2018-n#Text>

¹¹ Analysis of the regulatory impact of the draft resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of November 29, 2022, No. 1338 [Online resource] // Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. – 2020. – Access mode: <https://www.drs.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/3764-4.pdf>

¹² Resolution of November 29, 2022, No. 1338 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1338-2022-%D0%BF#Text>

¹³ Resolution of July 12, 2017, No. 497 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2017. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/497-2017-n#Text>

assistance occurs at three organizational levels: psychosocial support and accompaniment (first level), psychological rehabilitation (second level), and comprehensive medical-psychological rehabilitation (third level). To ensure effective delivery of psychological rehabilitation services, a Register of Providers of Psychological Rehabilitation Services for veterans and their family members has been implemented, which includes providers of such services. Additionally, these services (third-level psychological assistance) are provided by multidisciplinary teams, the composition and requirements of which are specified in the resolution.

Since June 27, 2022, the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation has launched a Hotline for Crisis Psychological Support for veterans, their family members, and individuals affected by the military aggression of the Russian Federation. The Hotline operates 24/7 and can be reached at the number 0 800 33 20 29.

The Ministry of Social Policy provides veterans with assistive rehabilitation devices (ARDs), including prosthetics. Combatants are provided with ARDs as part of the overall state support for persons with disabilities, regulated by the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 321 dated April 5, 2012 (with amendments).¹⁴ In Ukraine, a wide range of prosthetic devices with varying functionality has been implemented to meet the needs of patients with different abilities. These devices range from limited mobility within short distances to the ability to freely move across any terrain and engage in sports. Payment and provision of prosthetic services and other assistive rehabilitation devices (ARDs) are carried out through the Fund for Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities. Prosthetic services include selection, adaptation of the prosthesis, and subsequent training on how to use the prosthesis. The following are included among the assistive rehabilitation devices (ARDs) that veterans can receive:

- prosthetic and orthopedic products, including orthopedic footwear;
- special aids for self-care and personal hygiene;
- mobility aids;
- assistive devices for personal mobility, transportation, and lifting;
- furniture and equipment;
- special aids for orientation, communication, and information exchange.

To support individuals who have lost limbs and to promote quality prosthetic technologies in Ukraine, there is a "hotline" available for questions related to prosthetics: +38 050-177-68-39.

There are certain economic limitations: in the state budget of Ukraine for 2023, its final provisions stipulate the suspension of the privilege that provides free priority sanatorium and resort treatment for veterans.¹⁵ One type of benefit is the provision of material assistance to veterans. In particular, such payments are stipulated by the law of Ukraine "On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection." The following payments are included:

- payment of temporary disability assistance in the amount of 100% of the average wage, regardless of work experience;
- payment of temporary disability assistance to employed individuals with disabilities resulting from the war, in the amount of 100% of the average wage, regardless of work experience, and other payments.

¹⁴ Resolution of April 5, 2012, No. 321 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2012. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/321-2012-%DO%BF#Text>

¹⁵ Law of Ukraine "On the State Budget of Ukraine for 2023" [Online resource] // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. – 2023. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2710-20#n135>

Every year, on the occasion of Ukraine's Independence Day, one-time financial compensation is paid to combatants in accordance with the procedures and amounts determined by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine within the corresponding budget allocations established by the law on the State Budget of Ukraine. Additionally, families of deceased individuals, as defined by the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution dated April 29, 2016, No. 336 (as amended on March 17, 2023), are also eligible for compensation¹⁶, in case of disability or partial loss of working capacity¹⁷, a one-time financial assistance is provided, the amount and procedure of which are determined by legislation.

State support in the field of employment includes various benefits such as the right to return to the previously held job, the use of annual leave at a convenient time for them, and the provision of additional unpaid leave for up to three weeks per year at a convenient time for them.¹⁸ Veterans also have access to vouchers aimed at supporting their competitiveness in the labor market, which are coordinated by the State Employment Center. These vouchers provide opportunities for retraining in a skilled trade, specialization in a field to obtain a master's degree based on a bachelor's or master's degree obtained in a different field, pursuing education at the next level (excluding the third level of higher education, which is research/creative), specialization, and skills enhancement in educational institutions or with employers.

The main legislative act that defines the status of veterans and regulates the directions of state support for veterans is the Law of Ukraine "On the Status of War Veterans and Guarantees of Their Social Protection."¹⁹ The main normative legal act that defines the status of veterans and regulates the directions of state support for veterans is the Law of Ukraine "On the Status of War Veterans and Guarantees of Their Social Protection," No. 3552-XII, dated October 22, 1993. Numerous specific amendments to the provisions of this Law indicate the need for the transformation of the state veteran policy, which can be achieved through a thorough examination of the effectiveness of such policy and the activities of the state authorities aimed at its implementation. Most often, preferential provision is not sufficiently effective for the social reintegration of veterans into civilian life. One of the newly established mechanisms for such examination is the Comprehensive Review of the social protection system for war veterans and their family members, as well as the family members of deceased veterans and fallen Defenders of Ukraine. The Ministry for Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, as the main body in the system of central executive authorities responsible for shaping and implementing the state policy in the field of social protection for war veterans, is required to conduct the Comprehensive Review once every three years in cooperation with other state authorities responsible for the state veteran policy. The need for the construction of an updated system of state support for veterans, which includes not only social protection, is affirmed by the initiative of the Ministry for Veterans Affairs and relates to the development of the draft Law "On the Basic Principles of State Veteran Policy."²⁰ This is one of the steps outlined in the Government's Priority Action Plan for 2023, where veteran policy is one of the priorities.²¹

¹⁶ Resolution of April 29, 2016, No. 336 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2016. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/336-2016-%D0%BF#n10>

¹⁷ Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On Social and Legal Protection of Servicemen and their Family Members" regarding the Appointment and Payment of One-time Financial Assistance." [Online resource] // The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine – 2022. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2489-20#Text>

¹⁸ "Guarantees and benefits" [Online resource] // "E-Veteran Platform" – Access mode: <https://eveteran.gov.ua/benefits>

¹⁹ The Law of Ukraine "On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection" can be accessed online on the website of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3551-12#Text>

²⁰ The Ministry of Veterans Affairs has formed a working group for the development of the law "On the Basic Principles of State Veterans Policy" and invites experts and scientists to participate. [Online resource] // Government Portal. – 2023. – Access mode: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/minveteraniv-stvorylo-robochu-hrupu-shchodo-rozrobky-zakonu-pro-osnovni-zasady-derzhavnoi-veteranskoi-polityky-ta-zaproshuie-do-uchasti-ekspertiv-i-naukovtsiv>

²¹ Order dated March 14, 2023, No. 221-r "On Approval of the Priority Actions Plan of the Government for 2023" [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.. – 2023. – Access mode: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-zatverdzhennia-planu-priorytetnykh-dii-uriadu-na-2023-rik-221r-140323>

UKRAINIAN
VETERANS
FOUNDATION

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF PROMOTING THE RESOCIALIZATION OF VETERANS

In this study, we analyzed successful policies and practices of supporting veteran entrepreneurship in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Canada, Croatia, and Australia. This research is descriptive and aims to outline successful government policies and community practices that contribute to the rehabilitation and reintegration of the veteran community into society. The selection of countries for the study was based on existing strategic partnerships with Ukraine, years of experience in implementing and effective social policies to meet the needs of veterans, and high statistical indicators proving the effectiveness and consistency of veteran support policies.

United States

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there are approximately 19 million veterans residing in the country. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, about nine out of ten veterans are men. The largest cohort of veterans, comprising approximately 35% of U.S. veterans, is aged 60 and older. In 2021, the unemployment rate among veterans (4.4%) was lower than the unemployment rate among non-veterans (5.3%). Veteran-owned businesses account for approximately 5.9% (337,934) of all U.S. businesses, with an estimated revenue of \$947.7 billion, employing around 3.9 million workers, and an annual payroll of approximately \$177.7 billion.²²

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

According to the legislation of the United Kingdom, a veteran is defined as any person who has served at least one day in the Armed Forces of Her Majesty (regular or reserve) or on board merchant navy vessels involved in specified military operations, as determined by the legislation.²³ According to the Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom, there were 2 million veterans of the Armed Forces residing in Great Britain in 2022. It is expected that this number will decrease to 1.6 million by 2028, while the proportion of working-age veterans is projected to increase from 37% in 2016 to 44% by 2028. Additionally, the percentage of female veterans is expected to increase from 10% to 13%.²⁴ According to official statistics, over 14,000 individuals leave the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom each year, thus acquiring veteran status.²⁵

Canada

According to the 2021 Population Census by Statistics Canada, for the first time since 1971, citizens who served in the Canadian Armed Forces were included in the count. The census identified 461,240 veterans in Canada in 2021. The results showed that nearly one-third (32.0%) of all enumerated veterans belonged to the prime working-age group (25 to 54 years old). Approximately 4 in 10 (41.8%) Canadians who reported being veterans during the census were aged 65 and older, while 33,420 veterans were 85 years old and above. Overall, veterans constituted 1.5% of the total

²² Annual Business Survey Release Provides Data on Minority-Owned, Veteran-Owned and Women-Owned Businesses [Online resource] // Census Bureau. – 2021. – Access mode: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/annual-business-survey.html>

²³ The Strategy for our veterans. Valuede. Contributing. Supported [Online resource] // the Secretary of State for Defence by Command of Her Majesty. – 2018. – Access mode: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755915/Strategy_for_our_Veterans_FINAL_08.11.18_WEB.pdf

²⁴ Support for UK Veterans [Online resource] // The Commons Library. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7693/CBP-7693.pdf>

²⁵ Statistics [Online resource] // Career Transition Partnership. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://www.ctp.org.uk>

population aged 17 and older. Gender policy in the military service deserves special attention. In 1989, all military professions in Canada were opened to women, with the exception of submarine service, which was opened in 2001. When women began performing combat duties in the 1990s, recruitment for military service doubled. In 2021, almost one in six (16.2%), or nearly 75,000, Canadian veterans were women.

Croatia

In the country, there are more than²⁶ 500 thousand veterans, τSo, every tenth citizen of Croatia is a veteran. The number of officially registered veterans continues to grow, as from March 2020 to November 30, 2021, the number of individuals granted official veteran status increased by 3324 people.²⁷

Australia

Australia's state veteran policy is aimed at veterans and former military personnel (former members of the Australian Defence Force - ADF). A former military member is considered someone who has served in the ADF, either in the regular forces or reserves, for at least one day and has since been discharged from the Australian Defence Force. The 2021 census included a question for the first time about current and former military service in the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The 2021 census revealed that over half a million Australians (581,139) have served or are currently serving in the ADF. Of these, 84,865 are serving members, and 496,276 are former members. Less than one-seventh (13.4 percent) of former ADF members are women, although this proportion is slightly higher at over one-fifth (20.6 percent) for serving members.²⁸

²⁶ Ministarstvo hrvatskih branitelja [Online resource] // Zakon o ustrojstvu i djelokrugu ministarstava i drugih središnjih tijela državne uprave. – 2016 – Код доступу-
https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2016_10_93_1969.html

²⁷ Croatia Registers Over 3,000 More War Veterans During Pandemic [Online resource] // Balkan Transitional Justice. – 2021. – Access mode:
<https://balkaninsight.com/2021/12/13/croatia-registers-over-3000-more-war-veterans-during-pandemic>

²⁸ 2021 Census will help deliver better outcomes for veterans [Online resource] // Australian Bureau of Statistics. – 2022. – Access mode:
<https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/2021-census-will-help-deliver-better-outcomes-veterans>

BENEFITS FOR VETERANS IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND PECULIARITIES OF THEIR MEDICAL CARE IN INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE

Healthcare services are one of the priorities for veterans due to their direct experience in military operations, surviving in extreme conditions, and suffering various types of injuries. In international practice, it is common to establish a separate division within the healthcare system or within the defense and national security system that can institutionally investigate, create, and coordinate veteran policies in the field of medical care.

For instance, in **the United States of America**, all registered veterans receive a comprehensive package of services from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which includes preventive, primary, and specialized medical care, as well as diagnostic, inpatient, and outpatient medical services. Veterans may also receive additional benefits, such as dental care, depending on their unique circumstances.²⁹ There is also a separate program for veterans' family members called **the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)**. It is a comprehensive healthcare program in which the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shares the cost of covered medical services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries. Specifically, support can be provided to:

- the spouse or child of a veteran who has been determined by the regional VA office to have a permanent and total service-connected disability;
- the partner or child of a veteran who died as a result of a service-connected disability as recognized by the VA;
- the spouse or child of a deceased veteran who at the time of death had a service-connected disability;
- the partner or child of a servicemember who died in the line of duty, not due to misconduct.

In the **United Kingdom**, research centers under the Ministry of Defence are actively conducting research on the manifestations of post-traumatic stress disorder in military personnel and veterans. This includes investigating whether there is a disproportionate rate of suicide within the veteran community compared to the general population of the UK, as well as identifying potential interventions and support. Among other notable features of veteran support within the UK healthcare system is the Veterans' Health Alliance, consisting of 49 hospitals and emergency care services in England, Scotland, and Wales, staffed by approximately 100 accredited individuals. They share best practices and have demonstrated high-quality healthcare services for veterans, including raising staff awareness of veterans' needs and healthcare provision, establishing clear links with charitable organizations and local service providers. Additionally, the Royal College of General Practitioners, in collaboration with the National Health Service, has developed an accreditation scheme aimed at training general practitioners to better understand the specific needs of veterans and their families, including bereaved families.³⁰

²⁹ What Medical Benefits are Available for Veterans and Their Families? [Online resource] // Benefits.gov. – 2021. – Access mode: <https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/429>

³⁰ Veterans Factsheet 2020 [Online resource] // The Office for Veterans' Affairs. – 2020. – Access mode: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874821/6.6409_CO_Armed-Forces_Veterans-Factsheet_v9_web.pdf

Canada, in its own regard, stands out for its own experience in working with disabled veterans. Over 240,000 veterans in Canada have one or more disabilities. 1 in 10 disabled veterans consider themselves housebound, which represents 4% of the total disabled population. The majority of disabled veterans in Canada are middle-aged and elderly individuals (aged 45-64 years: 39%, 65 and older: 51%). These findings were revealed in the Canadian Survey on Disability conducted in 2017. This study encompasses individuals with disabilities who have previously served in the Canadian military but are no longer active members of the Canadian Armed Forces. 26% of disabled veterans have at least one unmet need for assistive devices or aids. 70% of disabled veterans have a disability related to pain, meaning their daily activities are limited due to chronic pain or periods of pain. The most common medical services utilized by disabled veterans include physiotherapy, massage or manual therapy (30%), and counseling (15%). One in five (22%) disabled veterans receive some form of disability assistance.³¹

In the context of inclusion for Canadian veterans, **the Veterans Independence Program** plays an important role. This program provides annual non-taxable funding for services such as home maintenance, cleaning, meal preparation, personal care, as well as professional medical and support services. The program is designed to work in synergy with local municipal programs to help meet the needs of a wide range of veterans. Services covered by VIP funding include: home care; housekeeping; access to nutrition; professional medical services and support; personal hygiene; outpatient medical assistance; transportation; long-term care; and home adaptations.³²

In **Australia**, a wide range of healthcare services is available to veterans and former military personnel within the healthcare system. These services include general practitioner services, specialized medical services including pathology and radiology, allied health services such as orthopedics and physiotherapy, dental care, community care, provision of glasses and hearing aids, treatment in both public and private hospitals including day treatment centers, and home support services. Subsidized pharmaceuticals are also available through the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS), and medical aids and equipment are provided through the Rehabilitation Aids and Appliance Program (RAP).

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) in Australia issues cards that provide veterans with certain benefits and discounts. These cards allow for access to free or discounted medical services and support, discounts on medications, transportation, and some types of cards grant access to mental health treatment funded by the Department if needed. The Veteran Card is part of the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant.³³

The benefits that can be obtained with a veteran card depend on the color of the card: "Gold Card," "White Card," "Orange Card." The card also allows the Australian community to recognize veterans and engage with them, as well as show appreciation for their service to the nation. Companies and community organizations participating in the program may offer discounts and other benefits. Each business or organization decides independently what privileges and advantages they will provide.

³¹ Canadian Veterans with Disabilities, 2017 [Online resource] // Statistics Canada. – 2019. – Access mode: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2019077-eng.htm>

³² Veterans Independence Program [Online resource] // The Royal Canadian Legion – Access mode: <https://www.on.legion.ca/veterans-seniors/service-officers/veterans-independence-program>

³³ Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant [Online resource] // Australian Government – Access mode: <https://recognition.dva.gov.au>

MATERIAL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS

Material and social benefits for veterans in different countries generally include direct payments and tax exemptions. This practice is one of the most widespread and is also applicable in Ukraine. At the same time, a characteristic feature of the preferential system for veterans in Ukraine is the possibility of obtaining land plots. In comparison, in international practice, assistance to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of losing their housing is more common.

In the **United States**, one significant tool of financial support is disability compensation. Veterans with service-connected disabilities and separations may be eligible for monthly tax-free disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), ranging from \$133 to over \$3400 per month. VA disability rates depend on the following factors:

- severity of the disability or limb loss;
- presence of a spouse, children, or dependent parents;
- presence of a spouse with a severe disability;
- unemployment due to disability.

Another significant tool of financial support for veterans is the VA Home Loan Program (also known as the VA Loan). Eligible veterans can use this program to purchase or construct a home, or refinance an existing mortgage, with no down payment, favorable interest rates, and uncapped financing. One advantage over traditional mortgage loans is the absence of Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI), a monthly insurance premium charged to protect the lender until you reach at least 20% equity in the home. Almost every VA loan is accompanied by a funding fee, which is paid directly to the Department of Veterans Affairs and helps sustain the VA loan program for future veterans. Not all borrowers are required to pay this fee, for example, service members with service-related disabilities are exempt. The amount of the fee ranges from slightly over 2% for first-time VA loan users to 3.3% for repeat homebuyers. The VA loan program makes homeownership more accessible for millions of veterans and active-duty service members in the United States.³⁴

Many states also offer significant benefits to their veterans. State-level benefits range from free college education and employment opportunities to free hunting and fishing licenses. Most states also provide tax incentives for veterans and special license plates, and some states even offer cash bonuses to veterans for their military service. These state-level benefits aim to recognize and support veterans within their respective jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has implemented various measures to improve access to social housing for servicemen and veterans. This includes changing legislation to ensure that severely injured servicemen and veterans with urgent housing needs are given the highest priority for receiving social housing from local authorities. In 2014, it was estimated that the proportion of homeless individuals among those who served in the Armed Forces ranged from 3% to 6%.³⁵ The Combined Homelessness and Information Network in Greater London shows that the percentage of UK citizens with military service experience sleeping on the streets of London has decreased from 3% in 2017/2018 to 2% in 2018/2019.³⁶

³⁴ VA Loans [Online resource] // Military.com – Access mode: <https://www.military.com/money/va-loans>

³⁵ The ex-Service community [Online resource] // Royal British Legion. – 2014. – Access mode: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/things-to-do/campaigns-policy-and-research/policy-and-research/the-uk-ex-service-community-a-household-survey>

³⁶ Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports) [Online resource] // London Datastore – Access mode: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

The Homelessness Reduction Act of 2017 guarantees that housing authorities intervene at an early stage to prevent homelessness and provide support. According to this Act, the Ministry of Defence, along with other government bodies, is required to refer former military personnel who are at risk of homelessness to the local housing authority if they consent to it.³⁷

In **Canada**, there are several financial programs aimed at supporting the income of Canadian veterans. One such program is the "Canadian Armed Forces Assistance" - a tax-free monthly payment. It assists low-income veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) who are no longer eligible for income replacement benefits after participating in the rehabilitation program. For the purposes of this program, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) assesses the veteran's household income based on the formula provided by Statistics Canada. This formula takes into account any taxable income the veteran currently receives, as well as any accrued government benefits. The following individuals are eligible to receive assistance from the Canadian Armed Forces:

- veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces who have a low family income, are seeking employment, or participating in the Career Transition Services program, and are no longer receiving income replacement benefits;
- family members of deceased veterans or veterans who are supporting a child.

Among other monthly payment programs from the Department of Veterans Affairs aimed at supporting veterans' incomes, there are:

- Income Replacement Benefit: A monthly payment to support the income of a veteran during their participation in the VAC rehabilitation program;
- Income Replacement Benefit for Survivors and Orphans: A monthly payment for widows, widowers, and orphaned children of deceased CAF members or veterans;
- War Veterans Allowance: A monthly payment for veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War who have low income;
- Compensation for Illness or Injury: Financial compensation related to illness or injury;
- Disability or Injury Payment: Financial payment related to illness or injury incurred in the performance of duty.³⁸

The most common form of financial support in **Australia** is pensions provided to support veterans and their families. To be eligible for a pension, veterans must have served a certain period in the Australian Defense Force and meet other criteria. The amount of pension received by an individual depends on various factors such as their income and assets, the type of pension they receive, and any additional payments they may be entitled to.

³⁷ Veterans Factsheet 2020 [Online resource] // The Office for Veterans' Affairs. – 2020. – Access mode: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874821/6.6409_CO_Armed-Forces_Veterans-Factsheet_v9_web.pdf

³⁸ Financial programs and services [Online resource] // Government of Canada – Access mode: <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/financial-support>

Pension benefits are regulated by different support programs and include:

- Income support is a pension based on years of service that provides regular income for individuals with limited capabilities. The income support supplement can be paid to veterans based on age or disability, as well as to eligible partners, widows, and widowers. It is paid to veterans earlier than the age pension provided by the Department of Human Services, recognizing that the consequences of military service can be unseen and lead to premature aging and/or loss of earning capacity;
- Compensation for loss of earning capacity is paid to compensate veterans for injuries or illnesses caused or aggravated by military service or certain defense service conducted on behalf of Australia prior to 1 July 2004. The amount of compensation for loss of earning capacity paid depends on the level of impairment resulting from war- or defense-caused injuries or illnesses;
- War Widow/Widower pensions are provided to compensate surviving partners of veterans who died as a result of military service or relevant defense service;
- Orphan pensions can also be awarded to children who were dependent on deceased veterans.

Croatia, in turn, throughout its history of independence, continues to develop a preferential system for veterans. Today, there are successfully functioning financial support programs for veterans, which include:

- Benefits for unemployed Croatian war veterans of the Homeland War and their family members. If a veteran and members of their household meet all the requirements and have no income, the amount of assistance is 1097.58 Croatian kuna. If they are Croatian war veterans or disabled veterans of the Homeland War in Croatia, an additional 0.3326 Croatian kuna per day of combat participation is added to this amount;
- Assistance for visits - a veteran or a recipient of family disability assistance who, due to constant changes in health status, is unable to meet basic life needs independently, is entitled to assistance for visits;
- Priority status in renting commercial premises - Croatian veterans have preferential rights to rent commercial premises for trade or independent professional activities in state authorities and local self-government bodies, as well as in legal entities owned by them;
- One-time financial assistance - in certain cases, when a veteran is unable to meet basic life needs, they are entitled to one-time financial assistance of up to 3,326 Croatian kuna;
- Exemption from fees and payments - family members of Croatian war veterans and disabled veterans of the Homeland War are exempted from paying certain court, administrative, and notarial fees;
- Right to receive shares - disabled veterans of the Homeland War in Croatia, family members of deceased veterans of the Homeland War in Croatia, and family members of veterans of the Homeland War in Croatia who went missing have the right to receive shares free of charge;
- Right to shares of the Croatian War Veterans Fund and their family members.

Significant material support for Croatian veterans is also the allocation of inclusive vehicles. A Group I disabled veteran of the Homeland War in Croatia is entitled to receive a passenger car with appropriate adaptations to their needs. At the same time, disabled veterans of the Homeland War in Croatia, Groups II-IV, have the right to reimbursement of expenses for adapting a passenger car for their own needs.³⁹

³⁹ Croatian veterans' and their families' rights [Online resource] // e-Citizens Information and Services – Access mode: <https://gov.hr/en/other-croatian-veterans-and-their-families-rights/290>

STATE SUPPORT FOR VETERANS IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

International experience shows that government support for employment and self-employment of veterans is one of the strategic directions of social support for veterans as a whole. It allows for the development of small and medium-sized businesses in Ukraine, partially reducing the burden on social sector financing. In almost every country we have researched, there are their own tools and strategies to support veterans in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship, which have proven to be effective and exemplary for replication.

When discussing the experience of supporting veteran-owned businesses in the **United States**, it can be said that the proposition created demand. The initial conditions established in the 1980s and 1990s for the creation of veteran-owned businesses, provision of loans and credit, received such a response from the veteran community and American society as a whole that within 10 years, there was a need to establish a separate institution - the Office of Veterans Business Development and a network of local centers to further support the development of veteran-owned businesses.

The **Boots to Business (B2B)** program deserves special attention. It is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by the Small Business Administration (SBA) as part of the Transition Assistance Program from the Department of Defense. It was initiated by the corresponding law in 2013.⁴⁰ The Boots to Business program has trained and graduated over 165,000 service members, veterans, National Guard and Reserve members, as well as military spouses.

The **Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)**, developed by the Small Business Administration (SBA), is another highly successful program aimed at providing entrepreneurship development services such as business training, consultations, and partner recommendations to transitioning service members, veterans, National Guard and Reserve members, as well as military spouses interested in starting or growing a small company. There are 22 participating organizations in this program operating under a cooperative agreement and serving as business centers for veterans.⁴¹

The **"National Veterans Small Business Week"** initiative, in turn, aims to unite the community of veteran entrepreneurs and create a platform for sharing experiences and ideas. Throughout the week, the SBA and its extensive partner network celebrate the strength and resilience of the veteran community by organizing events nationwide and sharing information about resources available to veteran entrepreneurs. During the week, the SBA, partners, and local organizations across the country focus on highlighting various aspects of entrepreneurship for experienced small business owners and veteran entrepreneurs in hybrid, in-person, and virtual formats. Topics include transition assistance, entrepreneurship training, government contracting, disaster assistance, and access to capital resources. Over 100 virtual events take place during the week, which are free and open to the public.⁴²

⁴⁰ Boots to Business [Online resource] // U.S. Small Business Administration – Access mode: <https://www.sba.gov/sba-learning-platform/boots-business>

⁴¹ Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) program [Online resource] // U.S. Small Business Administration – Access mode: <https://www.sba.gov/local-assistance/resource-partners/veterans-business-outreach-center-vboc-program>

⁴² Supporting the goals and ideals of "National Veterans Small Business Week". [Online resource] // 117th Congress – Access mode: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-resolution/1453?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Veterans%27+Business%22%2C%22Veterans%27%22%2C%22Business%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=24>

At the same time, the government has The Department of Labor to meet the citizens' employment needs. It administers federal labor legislation to ensure workers' rights to fair, safe, and healthy working conditions, including minimum wage and overtime pay, protection against discrimination in employment, and unemployment insurance. Within the Department of Labor, there is the **Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)**, which provides services to American veterans and transitioning service members, preparing them for meaningful careers, offering resources and employment experience, and protecting their employment rights. The service offers employment and training services to eligible veterans through the non-competitive **Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program**.

Under this program, funds are allocated to state employment agencies in direct proportion to the number of veterans seeking employment in their state. Additionally, VETS receives complaints and investigates violations of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, which protects the employment rights and ensures the employment of veterans, reservists, and members of the National Guard after their military service, and prohibits discrimination in employment based on past, present, or future military obligations.⁴³

At the same time, within the Department, exists the **Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach**, created to assess the employment and training needs of veterans, as well as their integration into the workforce. It determines the extent to which programs and initiatives of the U.S. Department of Labor meet these needs, assists the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training in working with employers regarding the benefits of hiring veterans, and provides recommendations on training and employer engagement to promote veteran employment.⁴⁴

In the **United Kingdom**, for example, during the transition from military service to civilian career development, the Ministry of Defence directly funds assistance in veteran employment through a partnership with non-governmental organizations called the Career Transition Partnership. As part of this collaboration with the Ministry of Defence, the non-governmental partner offers high-quality and free personnel placement services, supporting those who are leaving the Armed Forces within two years of their discharge date. This initiative connects veterans with employers who recognize the benefits of incorporating the talents, skills, and experiences of veterans into their organizations. Overall, in the 2018/19 academic year, 86% of those who left the service and utilized this service were successfully employed within six months after their discharge from the Armed Forces.⁴⁵

For some former military personnel, starting their own business becomes an integral part of the process of reintegrating into civilian life. According to the Federation of Small Businesses' report "A Force for Business" in 2019, there are approximately 340,000 small businesses being operated by former military personnel, accounting for 6% of all small businesses in the UK.

⁴³ US Department of Labor – Veterans' Employment and Training Service [Online resource] // Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs – Access mode:

<https://www.in.gov/dva/veterans-services/us-department-of-labor-veterans-employment-and-training-service>

⁴⁴ Veterans' Employment and Training Service [Online resource] // US Department of Labor – Access mode: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/about/advisorycommittee>

⁴⁵ Veterans Factsheet 2020 [Online resource] // The Office for Veterans' Affairs. – 2020. – Access mode: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874821/6.6409_CO_Armed-Forces_Veterans-Factsheet_v9_web.pdf

The report also indicates that the four most popular sectors for those who have left the service and started their own businesses were:

- Manufacturing (18%);
- Wholesale, Retail Trade, and Repair (12%);
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (12%);
- Construction (10%).⁴⁶

Speaking of **Canada's** experience, it is worth noting that approximately 5,000 individuals are released from the Canadian Armed Forces each year. With an average age of 41, they are relatively young and possess many qualities such as discipline and resilience, which are essential for entrepreneurship. Therefore, the need for veteran entrepreneurship development programs is strategically important for Canada, especially considering the successful experience of the United States.

The Canada Small Business Financing Program is an example of such a program that provides startup opportunities for veterans to open small businesses. The program is open to small businesses and startups operating on a commercial basis with an annual gross revenue of up to \$10 million. Under the program, the credit funds are provided by a bank, and the loan is registered with the Department of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada. Businesses can borrow up to \$1 million for financing:

- land or buildings used for commercial purposes;
- commercial vehicles;
- machinery and equipment;
- eligible franchise purchase expenses;
- software and computer equipment.

Another significant support tool for veterans in Canada is the provision of mentoring services and veterans' retraining programs, specifically aimed at developing veteran-owned businesses. For example, the Skills Transition Program "Legion" is designed to facilitate the development and acceleration of the civilian careers of former and current Reserve Force and Regular Force members of the Canadian Armed Forces. This is achieved through a three-pronged approach:

- **Education Verification:** After assessing the knowledge and skills, veterans may be granted credits or have credits blocked for further education in certificate programs, receiving diplomas, and academic degrees.
- **Entrepreneurship Training:** Every year, veteran entrepreneurs have the opportunity to attend the "Lion's Den Legion," where they can learn about the latest business practices and receive individual mentoring to create a business plan. After completing a series of seminars, participants present their business plans to a panel of judges and may potentially receive investments.
- **Job search assistance:** expert assistance is also available to prepare veterans and help them find suitable roles in the civilian job market.

An interesting initiative is "Coding for Veterans" - an intensive educational program designed to provide Canadian military veterans with the skills necessary to start and succeed in careers in computer coding, cybersecurity, or data analysis. The training sessions are conducted in-person or online, and the programs are available for all levels of qualifications and experience.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ What Support is Available for Military Veterans Starting a Business? [Online resource] – Access mode: <https://www.companydebt.com/what-support-is-available-for-military-veterans-starting-a-business>

⁴⁷ Support for Military Veterans Starting a Business in Canada [Online resource] // Company Debt – Access mode: <https://www.companydebt.com/support-for-military-veterans-starting-a-business-in-canada>

The Canadian charitable organization Prince's Charities, in collaboration with Futurpreneur, created the "Operation Entrepreneur" program in 2013, which offers assistance to former military service members in starting their own businesses. The program provides free one-day seminars designed specifically for transitioning military personnel, including ways to transfer military skills to their own businesses. It also offers a week-long intensive boot camp to learn the fundamentals of business and network with other entrepreneurial-minded military members. Futurpreneur provides access to funding of up to \$45,000 USD and the opportunity to participate in a mentorship program to help launch the business. In 2020, the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defense, Lawrence MacAulay, announced funding for "Operation Entrepreneur" through the Veterans and Families Well-being Fund. "Operation Entrepreneur" would receive \$390,000 USD over three years to expand its seminars and online learning programs for veterans and their families, with the aim of exploring self-employment opportunities.

The Government of Canada's Veterans and Family Well-being Fund provides grants and contributions to approved private, public, and academic organizations to support research, initiatives, and projects that promote or enhance the well-being of the veteran community. The Veterans and Family Well-being Fund is part of the support and benefits for veterans introduced in the 2017 budget to improve the well-being of veterans and their families. In 2018 and 2019, the Department of Veterans Affairs Canada funded 43 projects aimed at improving the well-being of veterans and their families.⁴⁸

Since 2017, the **Australian** Defence Force (ADF) and the Australian Department of Defence have implemented a series of new policies regarding the preparation of veterans for transition to civilian life, starting prior to their release from military service and the support system. Specifically, with the support of the Australian Department of Defence, the Defence Transition Program is being implemented,⁴⁹ which includes general programs available to all transitioning service members and targeted programs for those at increased risk. Common programs include:

Transition Coaching: All participants in the transition process are assigned a Defence Transition Coach from the Australian Department of Defence. They work with participants to establish post-transition goals based on their unique skills, interests, and aspirations, and develop plans to achieve those goals.

Job Search Preparation Seminars: All ADF members and their partners can attend job search preparation seminars at any time during their service and up to 24 months after separation.

Training: Funding of up to \$5,320 USD is available for education and training to enhance employability during the transition period.

Financial Consultations: Up to \$1,000 USD is provided for professional financial consultants to assist ADF members and their families in budget planning and financial security.

Post-transition Phone Calls and Surveys: Support is provided through contact with recently transitioned members for up to 24 months after transition. This allows former participants to access further support if there have been changes in their transition goals or circumstances.

Approved Leave: The Department of Defence grants ADF members up to 23 days of approved leave to participate in approved transition-related activities, such as attending interviews and other events.

There are also specific programs available. One of them is the Partner Employment Assistance Program. This program provides employment services and support for partners of veterans, including partners of veterans transitioning due to health conditions, and assists with expenses related to professional retraining.

⁴⁸ Support for Canadian Forces Entrepreneurs and Veterans [Online resource] // Small Business BC – Access mode: <https://smallbusinessbc.ca/article/support-canadian-forces-entrepreneurs-and-veterans>

⁴⁹ The Defence Force Transition Program (DFTP) [Online resource] Access mode: <https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/transition/coaching-and-support/defence-force-transition-program>

Since 2015, the Government of **Croatia** has been encouraging veterans to create and develop businesses within the framework of social and labor cooperatives. Additionally, since 2004, Croatia has implemented the "Professional Training and Employment Program for Croatian Veterans and Children of the Deceased, Imprisoned, or Missing" which has provided an educational foundation for the development of veteran cooperatives. Overall, since the introduction of measures to support the development of Croatian cooperatives, their number has increased from 10 registered cooperatives in 2004 to over 550 cooperatives registered in 2014. The results of numerous studies on veteran cooperatives have shown that the majority of them are engaged in traditional farming and food production. Croatian veterans believe that cooperatives have better competitiveness and lower business risk compared to individual entrepreneurship. They primarily rely on private capital and commercial loans as their main sources of financing. Veteran cooperatives in Croatia are generally considered social enterprises with predominantly socially-oriented goals achieved through a profit-oriented strategy. Veteran-owned cooperatives make up a significant portion of Croatia's economy, with more than one-third of all registered cooperatives in the Republic of Croatia being associations of Croatian veterans.⁵⁰

The largest niche of support for veteran entrepreneurs in Croatia is occupied by the state policy of grant financing for entrepreneurship. State funds are allocated for the following purposes:

- initiating independent entrepreneurial activities;
- establishing veteran cooperatives;
- expanding entrepreneurial activities;
- preserving veteran businesses.

There are a number of financing programs available that are designed for both Croatians, Croatian veterans, and foreign entrepreneurs, including the following:

1. ESIF Micro-Investment Loan (ESIF Mikro investicijski zajam) is a financing program funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). The objectives of this loan are to support the development of crafts and limited liability companies, modernize and expand existing enterprises, preserve existing jobs, and increase the number of new job opportunities. The minimum loan amount available is 1,000 euros, while the maximum amount is 25,000 euros.^[51]

2. Support for sustainable development of self-employment for people with disabilities. Financial support is available for individuals with disabilities who are registered in the Registry of Persons with Disabilities (Očevidnik osoba s invalid). This support is targeted at:

- Existing small, medium, and large businesses employing people with disabilities;
- Individuals with disabilities who do not have a registered business but wish to start one;
- Separate individuals with disabilities who do not have a registered business but desire to be employed in integration or protective workshops within small, medium, and large businesses.

⁵⁰ WAR VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: VETERANS' COOPERATIVES IN CROATIA [Online resource] // Proceedings of the 6th International Conference "An Enterprise Odyssey: Corporate governance and public policy – path to sustainable future". – 2012. – Access mode: https://bib.irb.hr/datoteka/612450.Peorda_Gregov_Vrhovski_2012-Weterans_entrepreneurship.pdf

⁵¹ Government grants and loans for entrepreneurs in Croatia: Guide for 2023 [Online resource] // Expat in Croatia. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://www.expaticroatia.com/government-grants-loans-entrepreneurs>

The funding includes: subsidized wages (the subsidy amount depends on the professional diagnosis of the employee and ranges from 10% to 70% of the minimum wage); co-financing of training expenses; co-financing of adaptation costs to the workplace; compensation for mandatory health insurance, and so on.⁵²

3. Self-employment of unemployed Croatian veterans in 2022 (Samozapošljavanje nezaposlenih hrvatskih branitelja 2022). This financial support is intended for:

- Unemployed veterans of the Croatian War for Independence;
- Unemployed children of deceased veterans of the Croatian War for Independence;
- Unemployed children of volunteer veterans of the Croatian War for Independence;
- Unemployed children of war-disabled individuals from the Croatian War for Independence.

The purpose of this government initiative is to create new employment opportunities for the target audience by providing a subsidy for self-employment. The subsidy amount is up to 80,000 kuna.⁵³

⁵² The same

⁵³ Government grants and loans for entrepreneurs in Croatia: Guide for 2023 [Online resource] // Expat in Croatia. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://www.expaticroatia.com/government-grants-loans-entrepreneurs>

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of policies and practices supporting the development of veteran-owned businesses in various countries, both government and community policies and initiatives to support veterans and facilitate their reintegration have been identified. Summarizing the international experience of supporting the veteran community outlined above, several main directions of such support can be distinguished:

1. Informational and research activities are one of the main and most extensive directions, which, in addition to information campaigns and large-scale field research, also involve the establishment of a network of centers for veterans and engagement of the public sector to meet the needs of veterans in the areas of employment, entrepreneurship, and psychosocial services.

2. Financial, credit, and tax support is a factor that contributes to the establishment of veterans as self-sufficient and independent members of society, particularly through the development of veteran-owned businesses, support for the technical equipment of veteran enterprises, and the involvement of veteran businesses as contractors and subcontractors in fulfilling government orders.

3. Medical and rehabilitation activities encompass a broad range of long-term support, which often require significant expenditures from the state budget to ensure free medical services and various financial compensations related to health conditions.

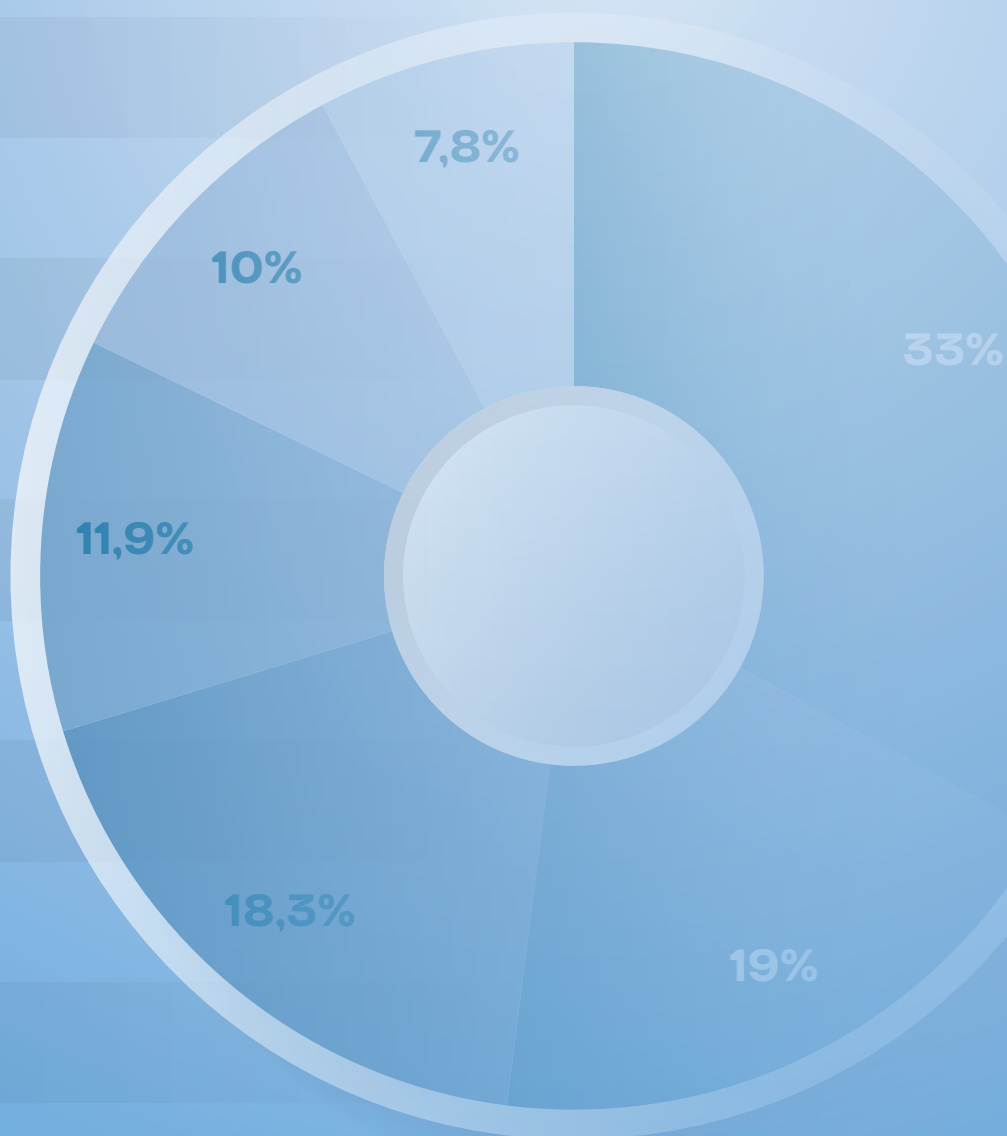
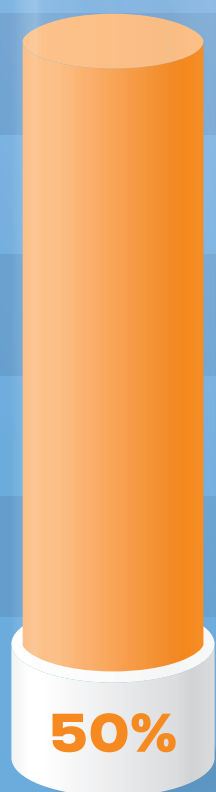
4. Social adaptation activities permeate all areas of state support policies for veterans in the researched countries. Starting from medical services and extending to retraining programs - all initiatives are organized taking into account the unique experiences of veterans and aimed at creating favorable conditions for their development in civilian life.

International partners, including the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, pay special attention to the social support of veterans, which is partially provided by civil society and partially by local authorities. The support for veterans is carried out both during the application for social benefits and during the process of job searching and establishing their own businesses.

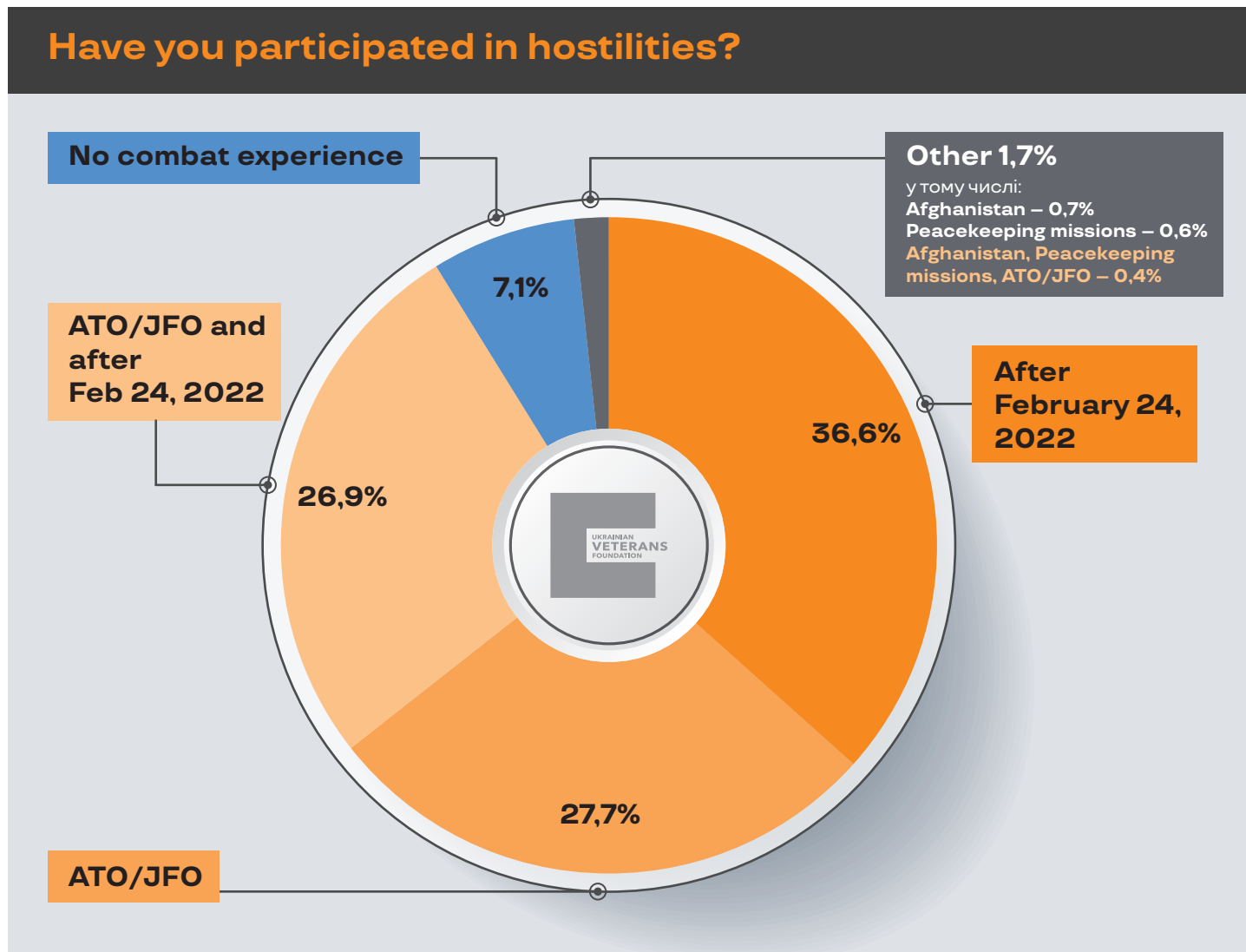
The experience of implementing policies and practices to support the reintegration of the veteran community in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Croatia, and Australia remains largely unexplored. Despite the significance of this journey towards success, there are still risks and challenges faced by both veterans and government authorities when implementing necessary changes. For Ukraine, the experience of the abovementioned countries serves as a valuable orientation in developing its own strategy to support the reintegration of veterans. This experience includes working with veterans from different generations, employing various approaches, and encompassing extensive directions such as financial and informational support for veterans.

RESEARCH RESULTS

UKRAINIAN
VETERANS
FOUNDATION



The full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine has amplified the experiences of participation in combat operations and consequently expanded the spectrum of veterans' needs and the corresponding obstacles on their path to support. Therefore, the opinions of military personnel and veterans who gained combat experience during the full-scale invasion were taken into account during the survey. It is worth noting that among the respondents, 36.6% participated in combat for the first time after February 24, 2022; 27.7% already had experience in combat in the ATO/JFO from 2014 to 2021, and 26.9% had combat experience in the ATO/JFO both before and after February 24, 2022. Less than 1% of the responses indicated combat experience in Afghanistan - 0.7%, and Peacekeeping missions - 0.6%. 7.1% of respondents had no combat experience.



The survey results revealed current problematic issues, a certain level of dissatisfaction, and urgent needs of veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war in the field of social services. Considering the data obtained during the survey, crisis issues were identified for further in-depth exploration through group-focused interviews, namely: medical services, benefits application and utilization, and employment. Conducting focus groups with veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war, we identified factors that contribute to the problems and obstacles faced by veterans during their access to social services. We also explored how veterans perceive the respect from society and the state based on the quality of services received.

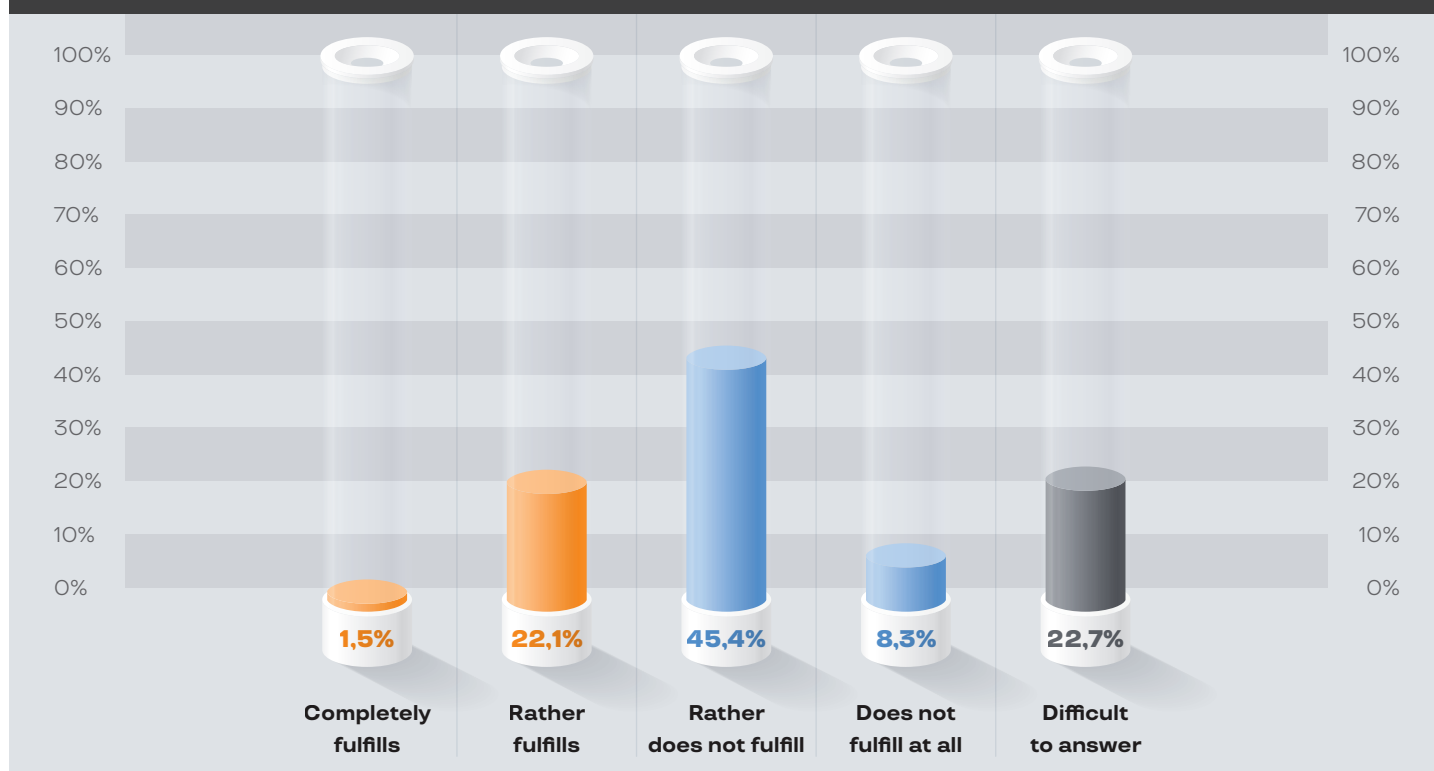
HOW DO VETERANS UNDERSTAND SELF-RESPECT?

Survey results

The questions in this block were mandatory for all respondents and aimed to determine the opinions of both active military personnel and veterans regarding the level of respect for veterans in Ukrainian society.

Regarding the question about the government's fulfillment of its obligations to veterans, 45.4% of the respondents indicated that it "rather does not fulfill" them. On the other hand, 22.1% of the respondents believe the opposite, stating that it "rather fulfills" its obligations. The opinion that the government "does not fulfill at all" its obligations to veterans was expressed by 8.3% of the respondents, while 1.5% of the respondents believe that it "completely fulfills" them. At the same time, nearly 23% found it difficult to answer this question.

To what extent does the state fulfill its obligations to veterans today?



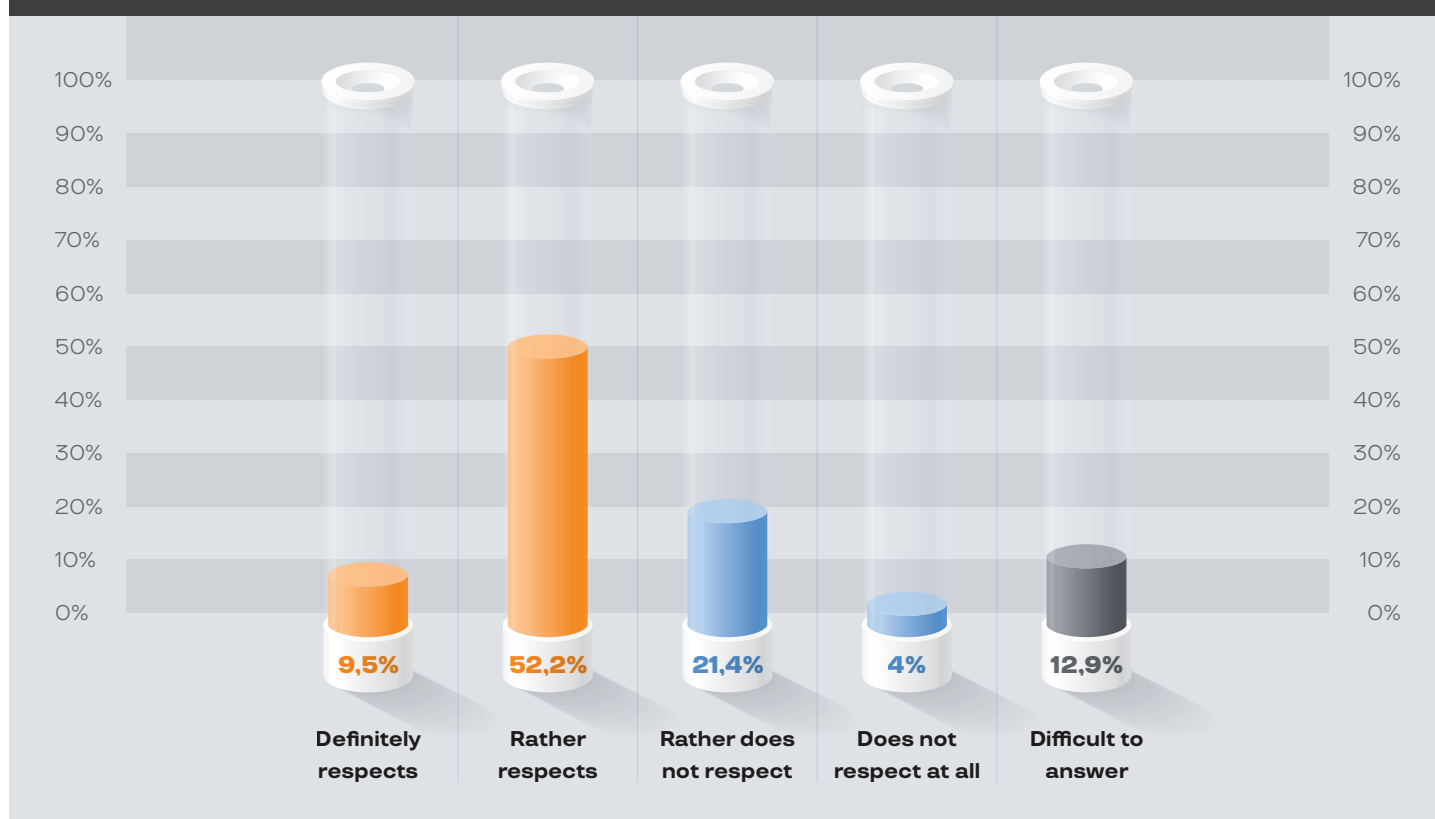
Taking into account the results of the survey conducted by the Sociological Group "Rating,"⁵⁴ it is worth noting that there is a general trend of increasing negative assessments regarding the government's fulfillment of its obligations towards veterans. In a January survey of the Ukrainian population, a decrease in the number of people who believe that the state fulfills its obligations towards veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war was noted: in August 2022, it was 69%, while in January 2023, it decreased to 53%. Those who hold a different opinion account for 26%. Surveys conducted among servicemen and veterans by the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation only confirmed the growing dissatisfaction with the government's activities in this area.

⁵⁴ The Twentieth Nationwide Survey: Perception of Veterans in Ukrainian Society (January 14-16, 2023) [Online resource] // Sociological Group "Rating." [Online resource] // Sociological group "Rating". – 2023. – Access mode: https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/dvadcyate_zagalnonac_onalne_opituvanny_ukra_na_p_d_chas_v_yni_obraz_veteran_v_v_ukra_nskomu_susp_lst.html

The absolute majority of surveyed servicemen and veterans believe that Ukrainian society respects veterans today (52.2% - rather respects + 9.5% - definitely respects). In the opinion of 21.4% of respondents, society rather does not respect veterans, while 4% are convinced that it does not respect them at all. However, approximately 13% of respondents were unable to give a definite answer to this question.

It is worth noting that in the January survey of the Ukrainian population conducted by the "Rating" Group,⁵⁵ an absolute majority (91%) believed that society today respects veterans, while the proportion of those who held the opposite opinion was significantly lower (6%). Therefore, further research into the reasons why some military personnel and veterans believe that there is a lack of respect for veterans in Ukrainian society becomes necessary, as the responses from approximately a quarter of the respondents from the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation indicate this perception.

In your opinion, to what extent does society respect veterans today?



Results of focus groups

Speaking about respect directly towards veterans, one of the participants in the group noted that respect for a person is primarily a result of their actions and deeds in society, regardless of their status or rank, a sentiment agreed upon by the rest of the group participants. One of the key points that resonated with all the participants in the veterans' focus group is that respect is a rather inconsistent category. **"We remember many examples on public transport when (drivers) did not allow people with combatant identification cards to have their ride. That is an example of disrespect,"** pointed out one of the veterans, adding, **"When the full-scale invasion began, people realized that we have this army, and war entered their lives because they used to live without it. It all became**

⁵⁵ The Twentieth Nationwide Survey: Perception of Veterans in Ukrainian Society (January 14-16, 2023) [Online resource] // Sociological Group "Rating." [Online resource] // Sociological group "Rating". – 2023. – Access mode: https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/dvadcyate_zagalnonac_onalne_opituvanny_ukra_na_p_d_chas_v_yni_obraz_veteran_v_v_ukra_nskomu_susp_lst.html

a priority, and a display of great respect emerged. It's very similar to how it was with doctors during the COVID period. The same goes for veterans. If there is a war in one form or another in life, whether they have been affected or have participated in it indirectly or directly, they understand the role and place of the military, and respect is formed based on that understanding." In response to the question of whether the Ukrainian government fulfills its obligations to veterans today, the majority of veterans agreed that the state has formally established benefits for veterans, but its accessibility remains the issue. **"There is a right, there is an opportunity. Whether they (veterans) have taken advantage of it or not is their direct responsibility. But in my opinion, yes, indeed, if they are military servicemen, they can benefit from most of the privileges if they want to and strive for it. If they don't want or strive for it, the state will not give them anything,"** noted one of the veterans participating in the focus group.

Assessing the attitude towards veterans from both the government and society, the opinions of veterans are divided: for some veterans, even though the benefits from the government are formal or difficult to access, they are seen as a manifestation of respect towards veterans; for others, the practical utilization of these benefits is much more important than the formal conditions. Specifically, the majority of veterans agree that the existence of benefits is a sign of respect from the government, while the numerous bureaucratic procedures that veterans face in obtaining these benefits are seen as a direct display of disrespect. At the same time, one veteran pointed out that the government is a reflection of society, so comparing their attitudes towards veterans would be unfair.

Female veterans

In turn, female veteran participants in the focus group, when discussing respect towards veterans, emphasized the importance of adhering to legislation regarding the social protection of veterans and shared instances of disrespect they encountered in society. One of the participants noted that it is particularly crucial to uphold the law at the local level: **"The laws are well written, but sometimes they are not implemented in certain regions... There are many stories related to land (benefits for veterans' land). For example, they cannot provide it because it simply doesn't exist there in the populated area, or they say, 'There are so many of you (veterans) here, but there's not enough land.'"**

A manifestation of disrespect from the state, according to the female veterans, is the lack of rehabilitation centers in Ukraine that could assist veterans in restoring limb functionality. **"It is very painful because the war has been going on for so many years, and there are so many people with limb problems, yet we cannot effectively rehabilitate anyone. On paper, we have everything, but when I see the actual rehabilitation measures, when they send the same Azov soldiers and their families to mold clay after returning from captivity, I'm not convinced that molding clay is what they need. They need something more,"** added one of the female veterans.

Speaking about manifestations of disrespect from society, the female veterans also shared that they often hear the phrase, "We didn't send you there." According to the veterans, such demeaning attitudes have existed in our society since 2014 and have not disappeared even after Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Overall, the female veterans note that the level of disrespect increases as the level of danger decreases. For example, according to one participant in the focus group, **"Nowadays, the respect from society is indeed much greater than it was in 2015, 2017, 2019. But now we also experience a slight decline, especially in areas where there are no active combat operations, and people are returning to their normal lives."** On the other hand, as an example of a direct display of respect towards the veteran community by Ukrainian society, the veterans mentioned the creation of privileged opportunities in private healthcare institutions, initiated by the owners themselves. In summary, one of the female veterans remarked, **"We can survive in any conditions, in basements or bunkers, because we have done that. And unfortunately, we know how to survive. But we need to be reintegrated into life and society, and we need to learn how to simply live."**

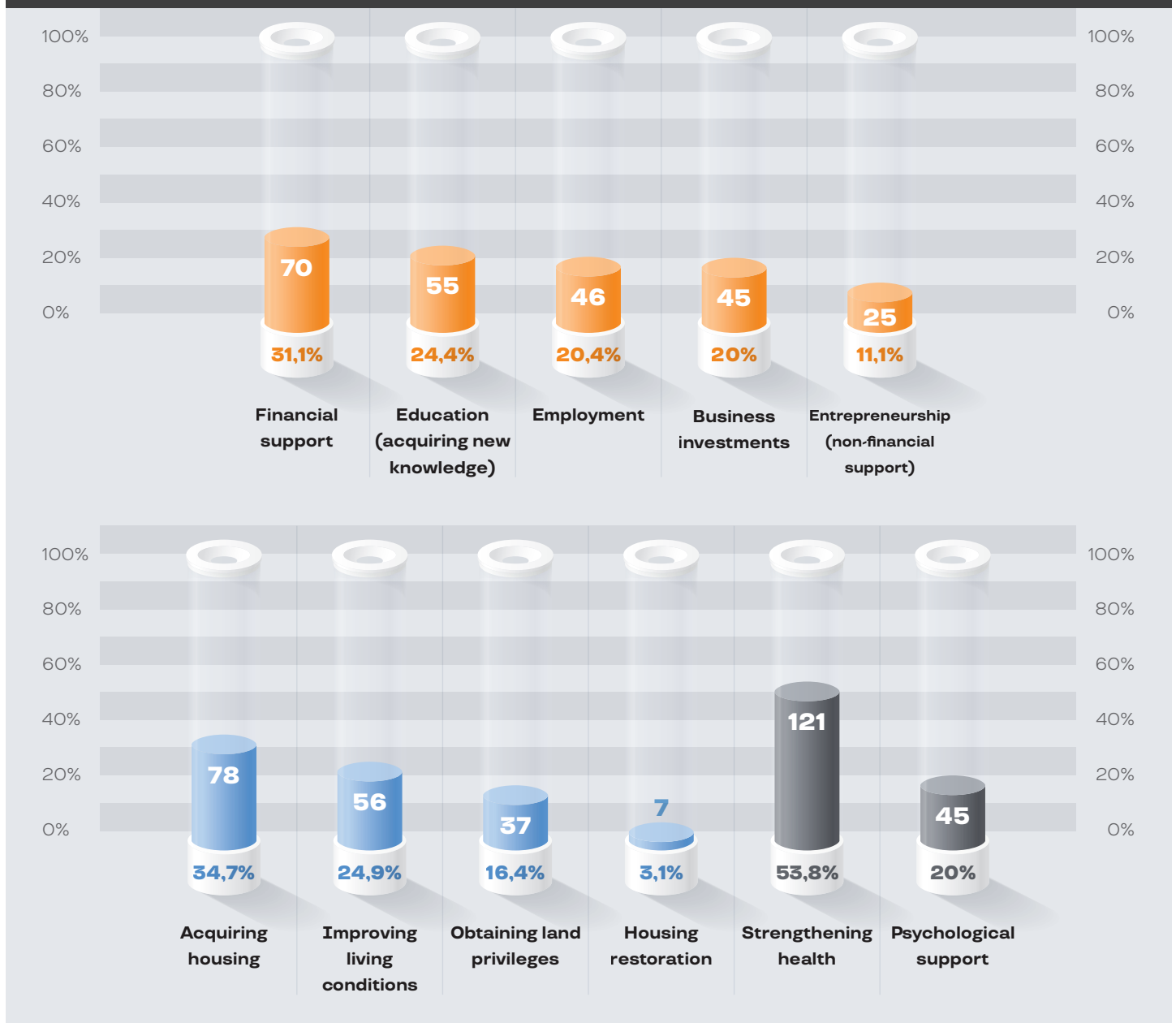
THE ATTITUDE OF VETERANS TO BENEFITS IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM AND THEIR MEDICAL CARE

Survey results

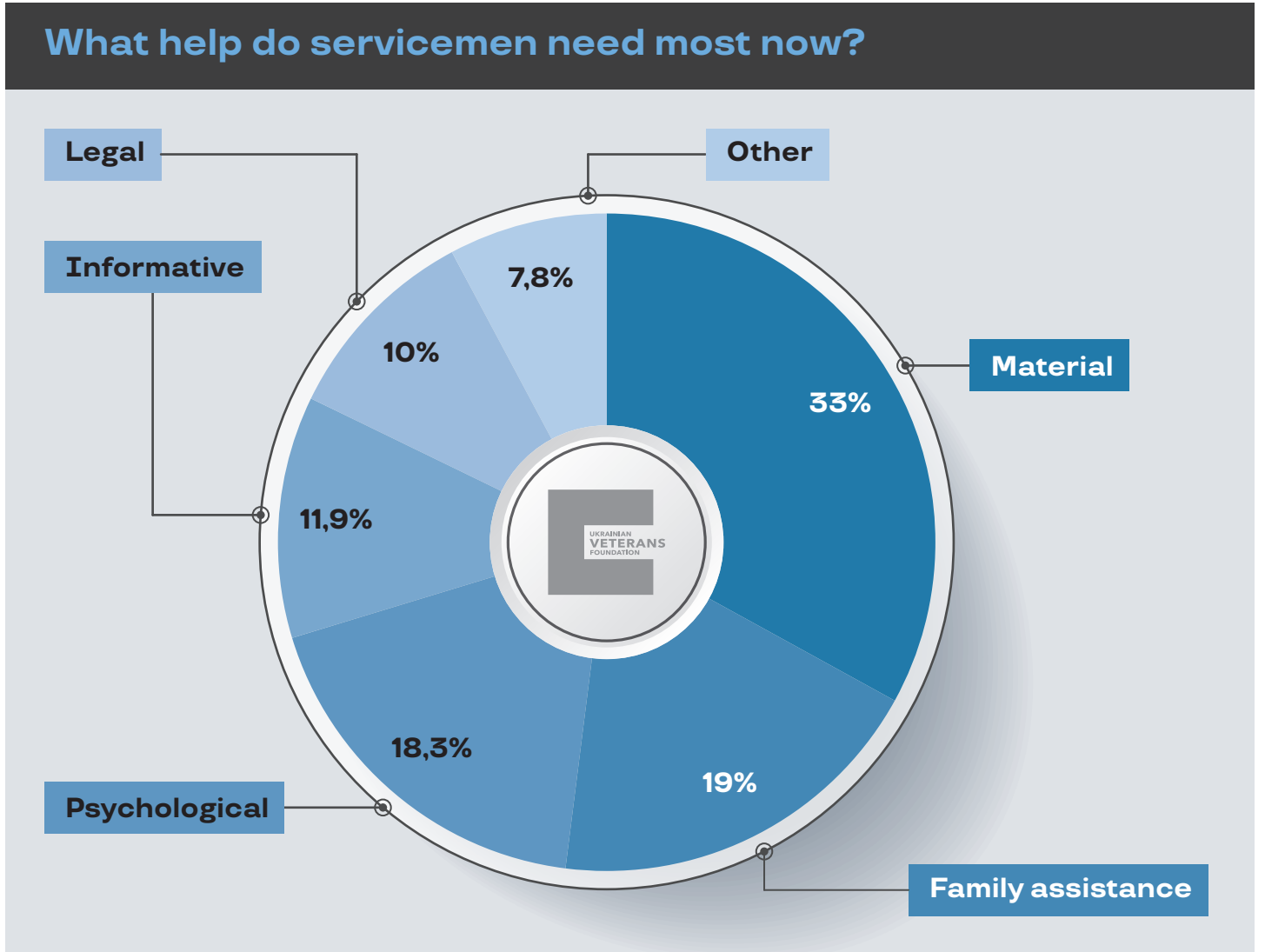
More than half of the respondents indicate that they currently and in the future will need assistance in the following areas: strengthening their health - 53.8%; acquiring housing – 34.7%; financial support – 31.1%; improving living conditions – 24.9%; education - 24.4%; employment – 20.4%; receiving psychological support – 20%; entrepreneurial investments - 20%; obtaining land privileges – 16.4%; entrepreneurship (non-financial support) – 11.1%; housing restoration – 3.1%.

What help do you need now or may need in the future?

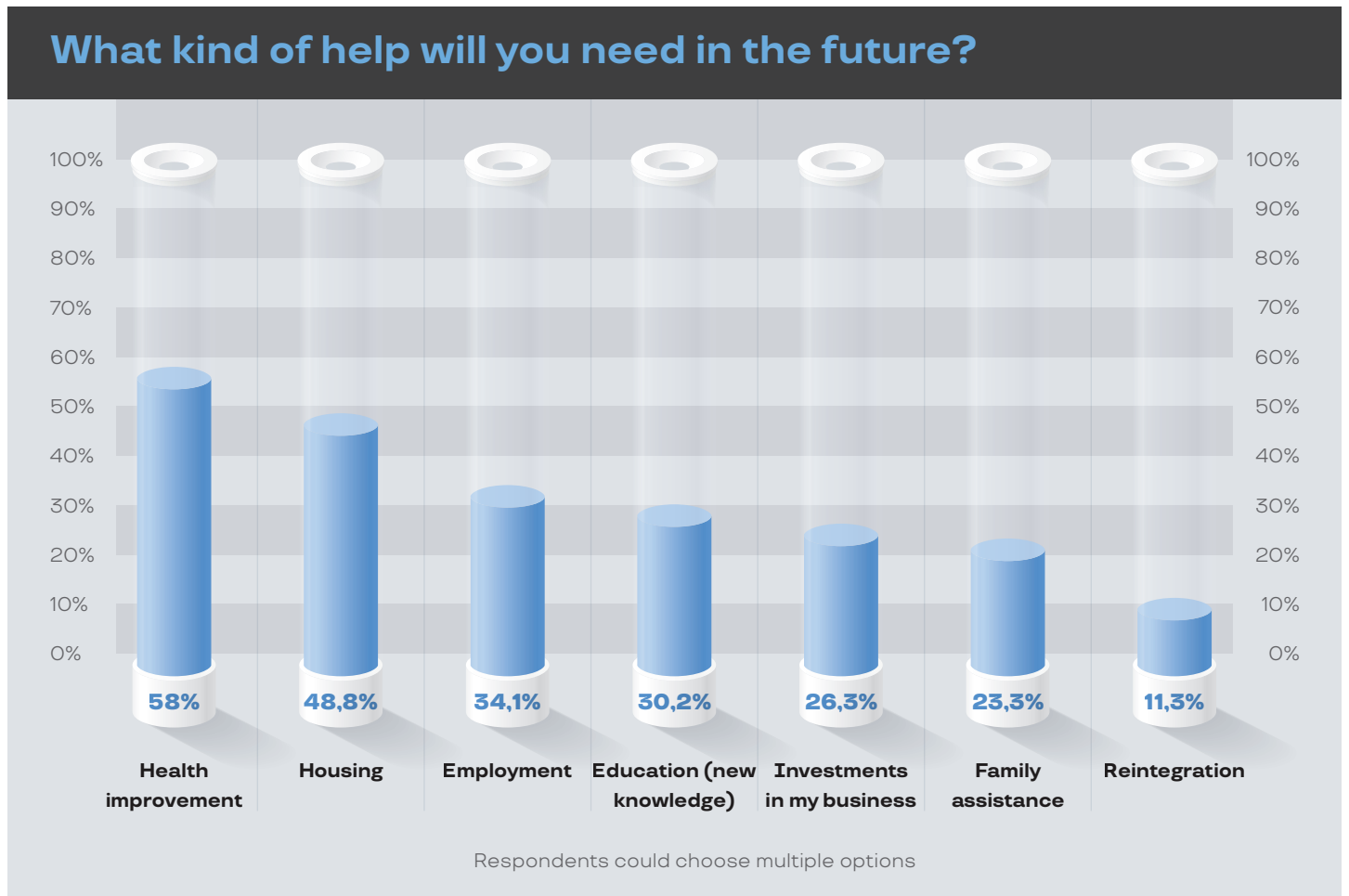
Respondents could choose multiple options



Approximately one-third of the respondents, who are military personnel, indicated that they require material support the most at the moment (33%). Other current needs mentioned include family support (19%), psychological support (18.3%), informational support (11.9%), and legal support (10%).

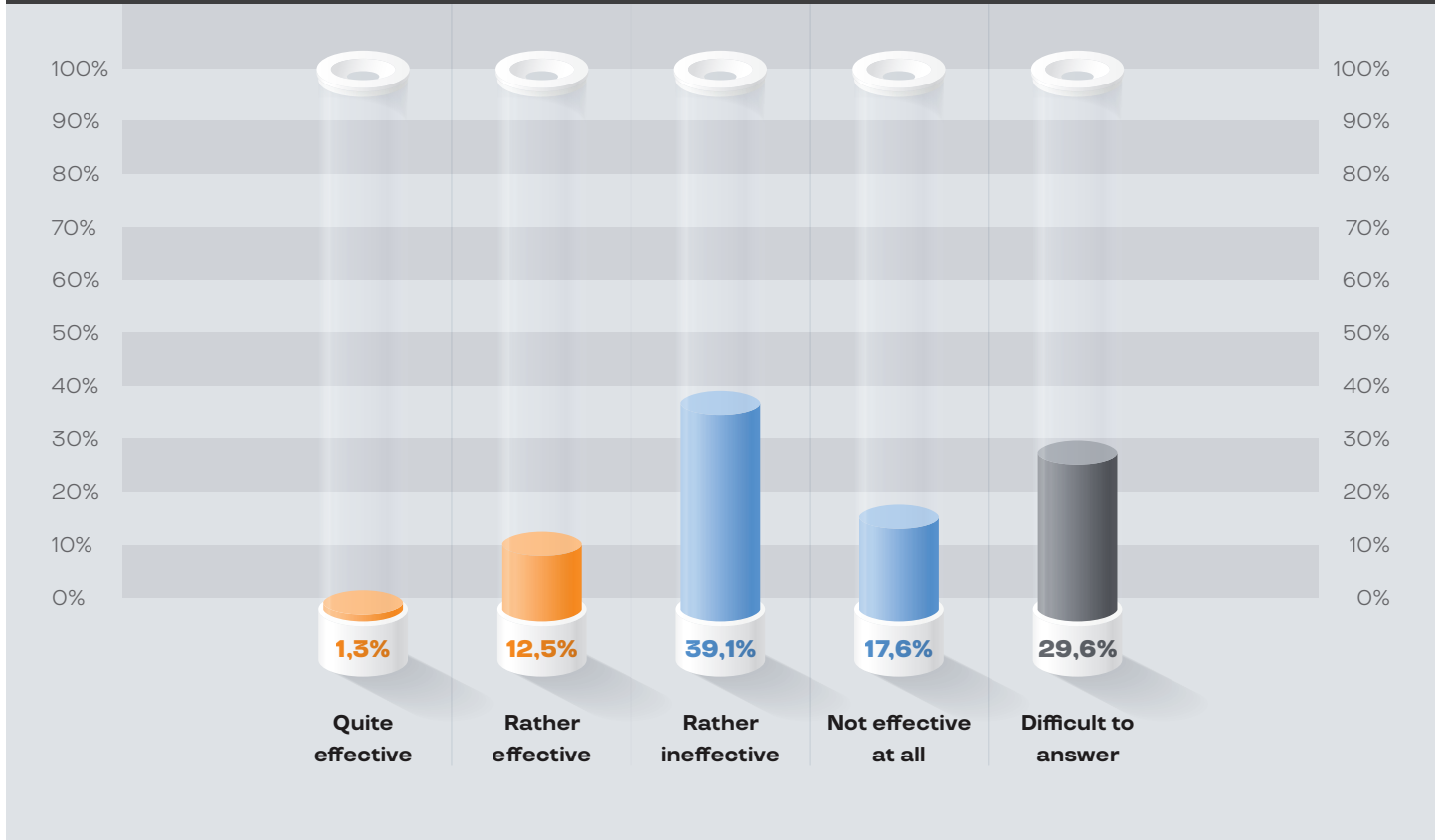


Looking into the future, based on the respondents' answers, they will need assistance in the following areas: strengthening their health (58%), housing (48.8%), employment (34.1%), education (acquiring new knowledge) (30.2%), investment in their business (26.3%), family assistance (23.3%), and reintegration (11.3%).

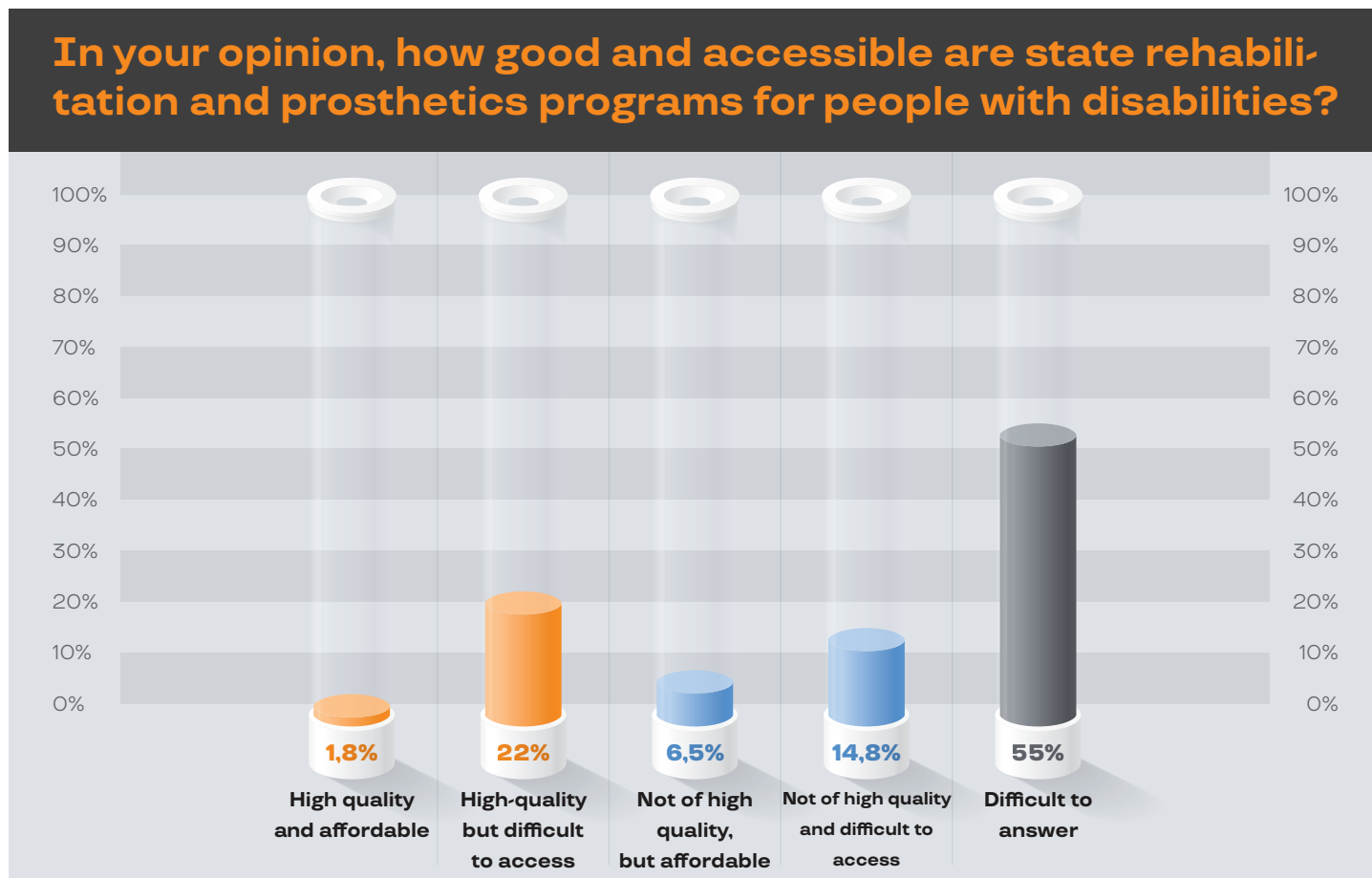


In response to the question "How effective are the government programs for creating an inclusive space and infrastructure for people with disabilities?" The opinions of the respondents were divided. Approximately 14% of the respondents consider the aforementioned programs to be quite effective or rather effective. However, for the majority of respondents, the government programs for creating an inclusive space and infrastructure for people with disabilities are considered not effective or rather ineffective, with 17.6% and 39.1% respectively. Meanwhile, one-third of the respondents were unable to provide a clear answer to this question.

In your opinion, how effective are government programmes to create inclusive spaces and infrastructure for people with disabilities?



The survey results regarding the quality and accessibility of government programs for rehabilitation and prosthetics for people with disabilities are less conclusive, as the majority (55%) chose the response option "difficult to answer." Qualitative but difficult to access programs are considered by 22% of the respondents, while 6.5% view them as accessible but not of good quality. Meanwhile, almost 15% of the respondents believe that the government programs for rehabilitation and prosthetics for people with disabilities are of poor quality and difficult to access, with only 1.8% of the respondents rating them as completely qualitative and accessible.



Results of focus groups

Interviews with veterans in groups have shown that they distinguish military medicine from civilian medicine, particularly in terms of quality criteria, the competence of professionals, and the direct attitude towards military personnel. According to veterans, due to the war and additional funding for healthcare institutions serving military personnel and veterans, the quality of services provided, especially in hospitals, is higher than in civilian medical establishments. Veterans argue that doctors in military hospitals have gained extensive experience, resulting in better quality of medical care. "A surgeon in Dnipro is a good surgeon because they can perform 50 surgeries a day, and that's all they do. They have the skill. If we talk about workload, ours is almost critical," commented one of the veterans on the situation. According to veterans, the situation is expected to worsen after the war ends: "Most people will have health problems after demobilization and will turn to healthcare institutions that are unable to provide them with an adequate level of medical assistance." Responding to the question, "What healthcare benefits are currently lacking in the healthcare system?", the veterans mentioned the following services:

- sanatorium and resort treatment;
- prosthetics in Ukraine;
- treatment of complex injuries/illnesses abroad;
- treatment of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and blast injuries (concussions).

The veterans also see a significant problem in the fact that "commanders today do not pay attention to neurological and psychiatric disorders" and there is no unified position on what to do about it. When it comes to psychological and psychiatric assistance for military personnel, veterans specifically emphasize the lack of properly qualified professionals. **"In my opinion, PTSD and the psychological component, in general, need to be addressed as a couple... Because very often, when a person has been through war, they come back and their significant other doesn't understand what to do or what they experienced there. And many families fall apart. It's a huge problem,"** noted one participant in the focus group.

Regarding inclusive spaces, the majority of veterans believe that they are lacking, although they agree that since 2014, there have been certain positive developments in this direction. Some areas in Kyiv are considered accessible, but in villages, such conditions are absent. Additionally, many old and new buildings are not adapted for wheelchair users, which hinders mobility and limits accessibility for people with disabilities within the city.

The interviews conducted in focus groups revealed that veterans who did not experience limb loss are not familiar with the state programs for rehabilitation and prosthetics. However, within the veteran community, the consequences of such injuries are discussed, particularly regarding bureaucracy and the limited accessibility of prosthetics in Ukraine. There is also a mention of the annual reevaluation of disability status (Vocational and Labor Capacity Examination) which is seen as frustrating and disrespectful by veterans.

Female veterans

Discussing the benefits in the healthcare system and medical care, female veterans expressed varied opinions, summarizing that there are both positive and negative experiences in service provided to veterans within healthcare institutions. Overall, this depends not on whether it is state medical assistance but on the specific facility. The negative experiences shared by female veterans included their stay at the Kyiv Central Military Hospital, where they encountered a lack of inclusive spaces and discomfort for people with mobility limitations. When asked about the missing benefits in the healthcare system, most female veterans specifically mentioned the absence of necessary conditions for the treatment of women in military hospitals and maternity wards. **"During the eighth year of the war, when I was in a maternity hospital in Kyiv, I had the impression that I was the first female volunteer service woman to give birth there. And it's nonsense. (...) I asked, 'What's the big deal here?' Why does the urology department have a separate ward for servicemen, but the women's department doesn't?"** shared one of the participants based on her personal experience. The female veterans also emphasized the need for benefits related to assisted reproductive technology (ART), as **many women have compromised their reproductive function or missed their reproductive age due to their service but still desire to have children in the future.** Among other crucial benefits, the female veterans mentioned prosthetics and specialized and free psychotherapy for veterans.

According to the female veterans, there is a lack of benefits and opportunities for prosthetics for veterans in Ukraine, a significant percentage of whom are young individuals. They noted that while **there are benefits on paper for prosthetics, there are no provisions for implant placement, such as dental implants. They questioned whether the state cannot allocate some funds to ensure that veterans look good. They also mentioned the need for prosthetics for women, as there are cases of chest injuries among female veterans, but breast prostheses are not provided.** Overall, as the female veterans pointed out, the field of prosthetics in Ukraine requires special attention. Even if Ukraine cannot provide veterans with the necessary treatment and rehabilitation measures, the state should establish clear and accessible conditions for their treatment, prosthetics, and rehabilitation abroad. This includes an open database of institutions and prosthetic programs, as well as a proper registry of candidates.

The participants of the focus group, when assessing the provision of inclusive spaces and infrastructure for people with disabilities, pointed out that in Ukraine, the priorities are misplaced. Roads are made safe primarily for cyclists, rather than for wheelchair users. **"I can say that with each passing year, there are more adaptations and opportunities, but overall, our city (Kyiv) is not built inclusively. Even where ramps are installed, they are placed at such an angle that it's more of a facade,"** added one of the female veterans.

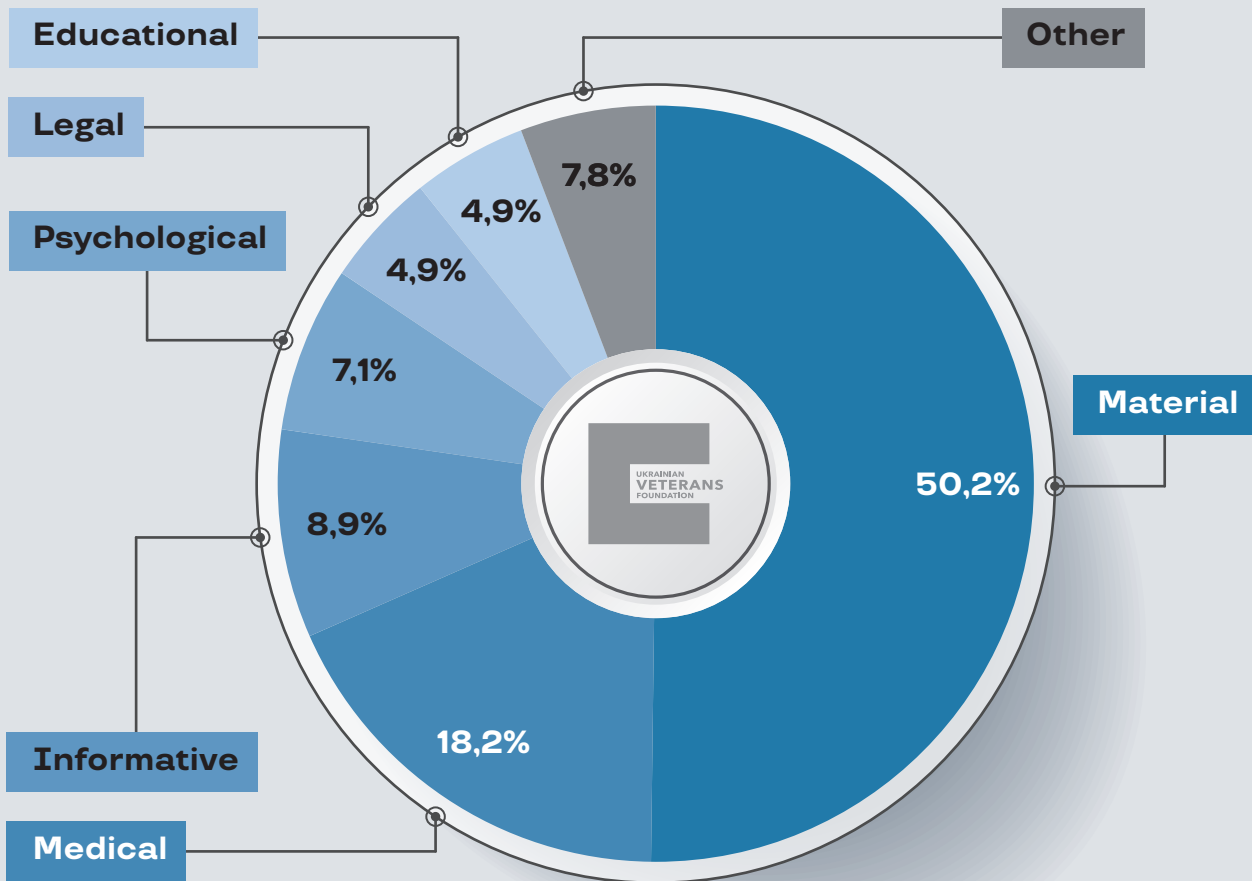
Regarding psychological assistance and rehabilitation for veterans in Ukraine, female veterans note that **"there are very good programs and professionals in Ukraine, but it would be better if it were a facility where a person can both eat and rest during the rehabilitation course, similar to a sanatorium. We have few sanatorium-type facilities in Ukraine, and they are all very 'Soviet-style'."** At the same time, according to the veterans, when they undergo treatment, the first person they usually encounter is a psychiatrist or a psychiatrist-narcologist. They have not come across a psychotherapist in state clinics, hospitals, or military hospitals, according to the veterans' words.

OPINIONS OF VETERANS REGARDING THEIR FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND MATERIAL BENEFITS

Survey results

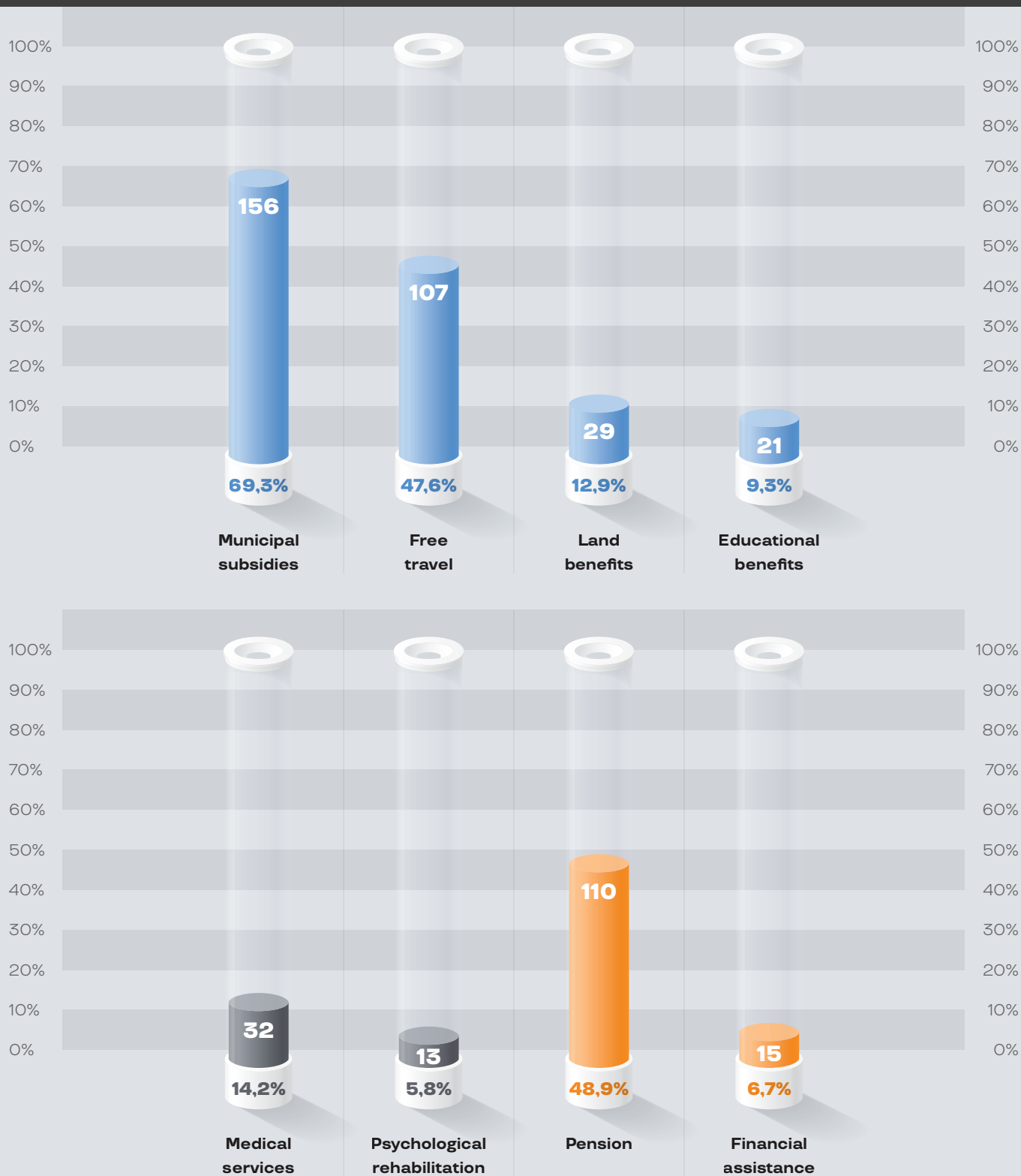
Respondents among veterans who are no longer in active service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine identified their current needs for support as follows: 63.6% stated the need for financial support, 18.2% highlighted the need for medical support, 8.9% mentioned the need for informational support, 7.1% expressed the need for psychological support, 4.9% indicated the need for legal and educational support, and the remaining percentage mentioned other forms of support.

What kind of support do you need most now?



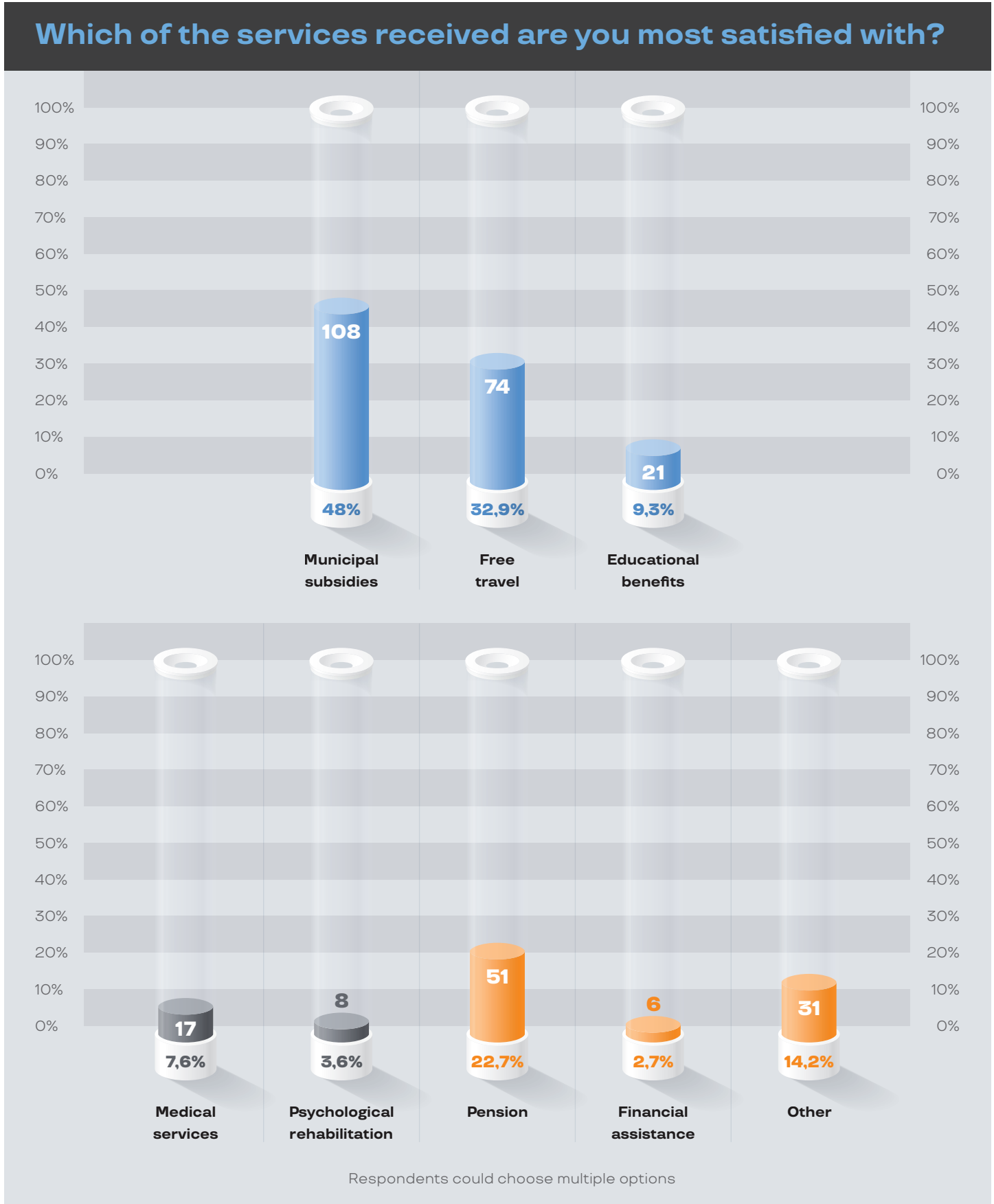
In response to the question, "What benefits do you and your family receive?" more than half of the respondents answered that they receive utility subsidies - 69.3%. Additionally, 48.9% of respondents receive pensions, 47.6% of respondents receive pensions, 47.6% benefit from free public transportation, 14.2% have benefits for medical services, 12.9% for land, 9.3% for education, 6.7% receive financial assistance, and 5.8% receive psychological rehabilitation support.

What benefits do you and your family enjoy?



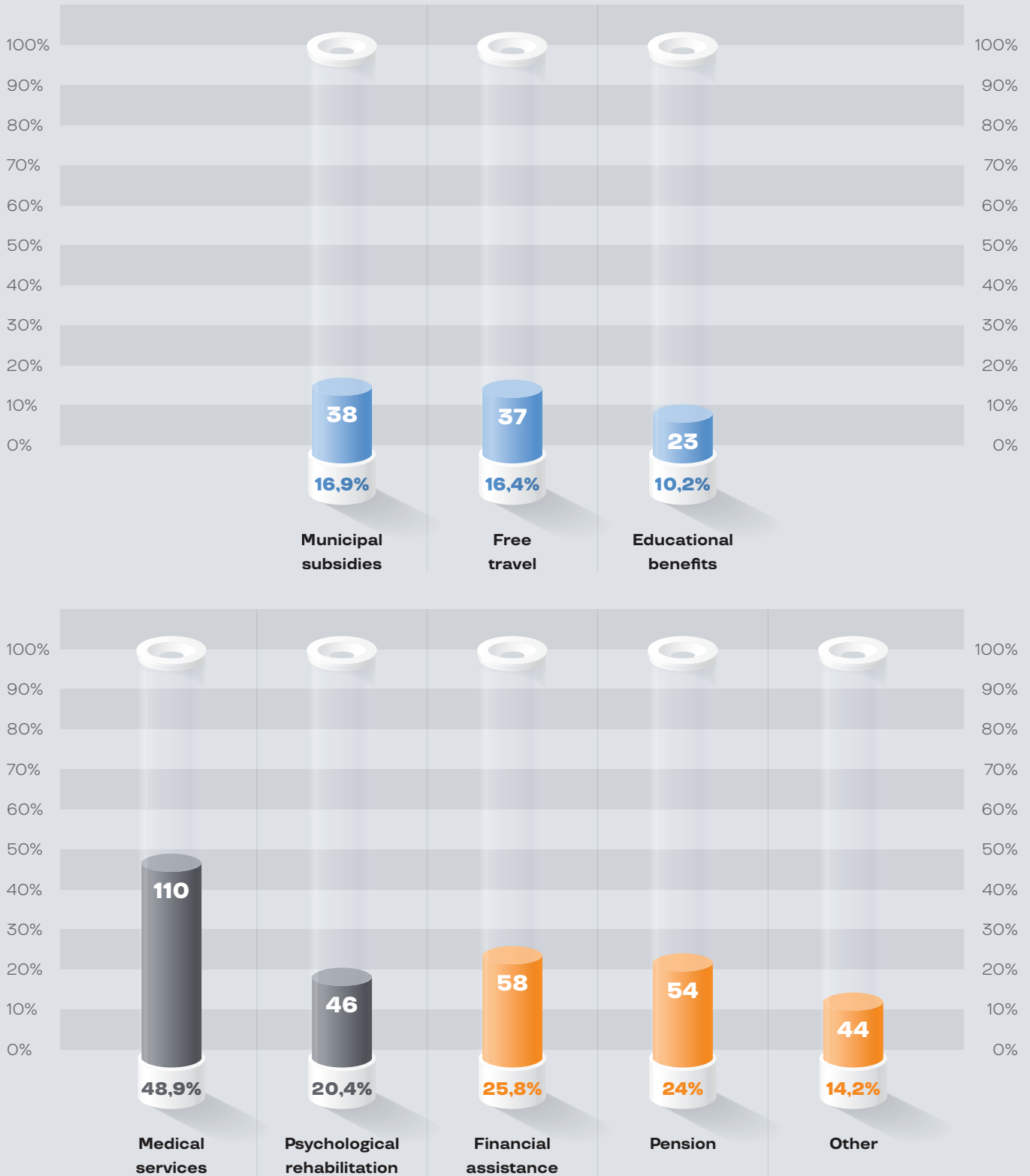
Respondents could choose multiple options

In response to the question about services for veterans, the majority of respondents highlighted their highest satisfaction with utility subsidies (48%), followed by free public transportation (32.9%) and pensions (22.7%). Only 3.6% expressed satisfaction with psychological rehabilitation, and 2.7% with financial assistance.



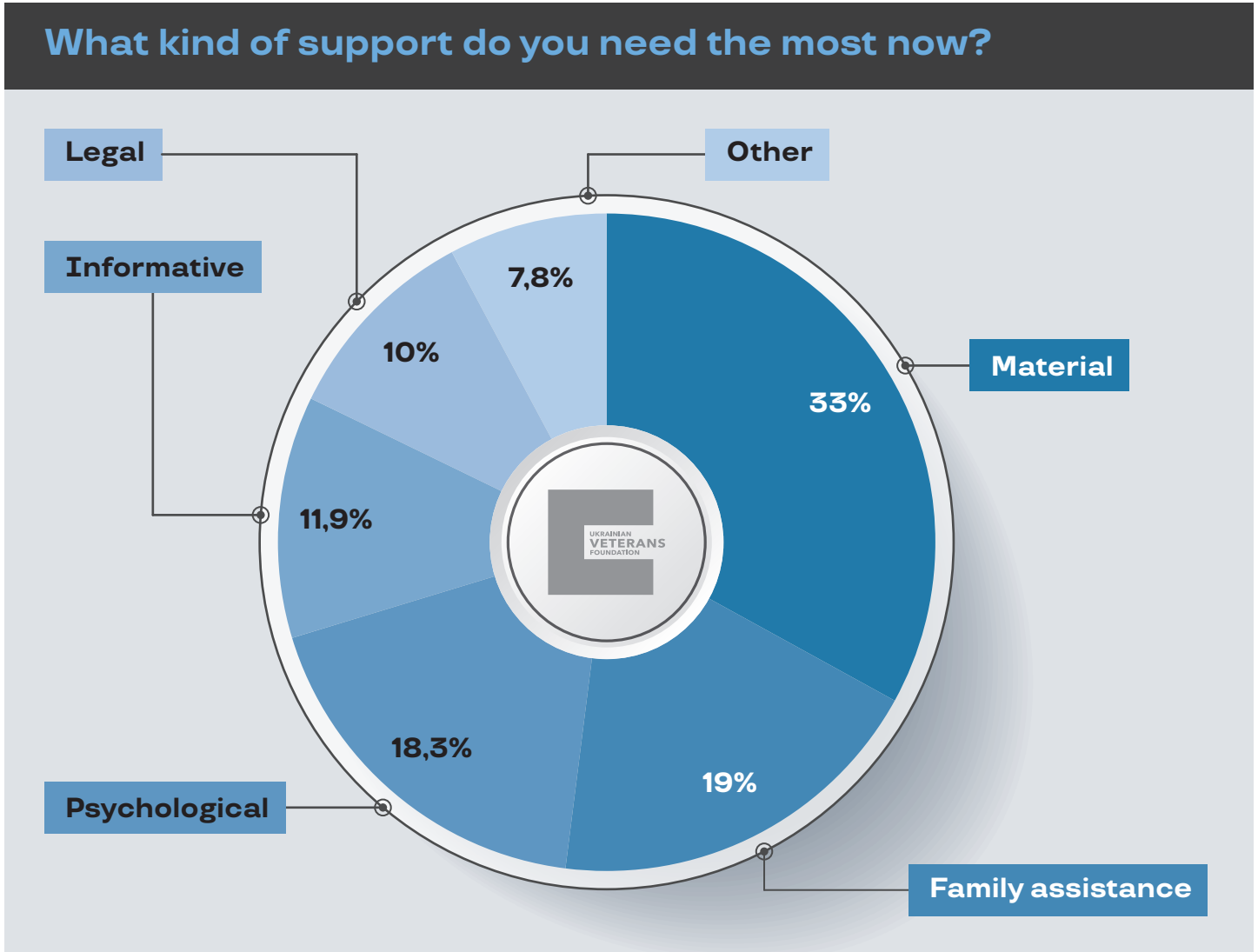
In response to the question "Which of the received services are you dissatisfied with or have been denied?" approximately half of the respondents mentioned medical services (48.9%). Other commonly cited answers include financial assistance (25.8%), pensions (24%), and psychological rehabilitation (20.4%).

Which of the services received are you dissatisfied with or were denied?



Respondents could choose multiple options

In response to the question "What support do you currently need the most?" one-third of the respondents, who are military personnel, indicated a need for financial support (33%). Other current needs include family support (19%), psychological support (18.3%), informational support (11.9%), and legal support (10%).



In response to the question "Are you satisfied with the level of your financial compensation?" 36.6% of the respondents answered that they are completely satisfied. However, for 37.2% of the surveyed military personnel, their financial compensation is lower than necessary. At the same time, it was difficult for 20.7% of the respondents to answer this question, and for 3%, their financial compensation was higher than necessary.



The aforementioned question was part of the "Twentieth Nationwide Survey: Ukraine during the war. The image of veterans in Ukrainian society" conducted in January 2023 by the Sociological Group "Rating" at the initiative of the Ukrainian Veterans Fund of the Ministry of Veterans.⁵⁶ Comparing the results of these two surveys, it is worth noting that the audience of the "Rating" survey encompassed the entire population of Ukraine aged 18 and older, excluding the population of the annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the occupied parts of Donbas, as well as territories where Ukrainian mobile communication was unavailable at the time of the survey. Therefore, direct comparison of these results is erroneous. However, it is important to note that the opinions of respondents from both surveys regarding the level of military remuneration were proportionally similar. In the "Rating" survey, 40% considered the salary of soldiers directly involved in combat operations to be optimal, 34% considered it lower than necessary, 8% considered it higher, and 18% were unable to assess it. As for the salary of soldiers serving in the rear, half of the respondents considered it optimal, 15% considered it lower than necessary, 11% considered it higher than necessary, and 25% were unable to assess it. In comparison with the survey conducted in August 2022, there are no significant changes in the evaluation of the salary levels for the mentioned categories of military personnel.

⁵⁶ The Twentieth Nationwide Survey: Perception of Veterans in Ukrainian Society (January 14-16, 2023) [Online resource] // Sociological Group "Rating." [Online resource] // Sociological group "Rating". – 2023. – Access mode: https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/dvadcyate_zagalnonac_onalne_opituvanny_ukra_na_p_d_chas_v_yni_obraz_veteran_v_v_ukra_nskomu_susp_lst.html

Results of focus groups

During the focus group, veterans answered a series of questions regarding financial support, including the shortcomings of the existing financial support system, the obstacles veterans most commonly face when applying for various benefits, and the most important effective benefits they receive. Participants in the focus group noted that the overall system of financial support for veterans and military personnel operates differently depending on the region. In addition to nationwide state programs of financial support, there are also effective initiatives at the level of rural and urban communities.

According to veterans, state financial support has certain drawbacks, which we have summarized into several key themes:

1. Bureaucratic system: Veterans' experiences indicate that the system of benefits registration in Ukraine is not standardized. For example, in some regions, veterans are required to submit annual applications to receive annual payments, while veterans in Kyiv receive annual financial assistance by submitting an application only once. Additionally, there are difficulties in obtaining benefits, which contribute to corruption and shadow schemes. One participant noted, **"Not all veterans have the necessary level of preparation, in terms of bureaucracy, to achieve or receive a benefit, to go through this long quest... Such channels exist, but usually it's either personal connections or a corruption component."**

2. Continuous and broad financial support from the state may demotivate some veterans from developing independently. One participant in the focus group expressed this opinion, stating, **"I understand for myself that it helps me in something, that the state has taken on certain obligations, such as paying for housing (benefits for rent and utilities), having a vacation with my family (sanatorium treatment), providing medical assistance. I believe that should be enough. Because if I get paid every day and every month, why should I do anything else?"**

3. Veterans' position regarding the use of state material benefits should be more conscious and responsible. This includes the use of land plots by veterans instead of engaging in speculation or selling land to developers, which, according to focus group participants, is a widespread phenomenon among veterans.

4. The "human factor" in the benefits registration system: Veterans participating in the focus groups appealed to the "Soviet mentality" of social service workers and the lack of understanding of the specifics of working with combat participants considering their experience.

Veterans see a potential solution to address some of the aforementioned drawbacks in the creation of specialized support services for veterans during the benefits registration process. **"I am convinced that even if the payment for this support becomes official, many veterans would agree to pay a certain amount as a bonus to receive a specific benefit... (currently) dishonest employees take away this payment function,"** noted one participant in the focus group.

In response to the question, "Which benefits do you consider important and effective?" veterans named:

- Accessible and free medical care for military personnel and veterans;
- Opportunities for retraining as a tool for the social reintegration of veterans;
- Benefits regarding land, including preferential access to land and its acquisition;
- Educational benefits for veterans' children, such as priority enrollment in kindergartens and schools.

Female veterans

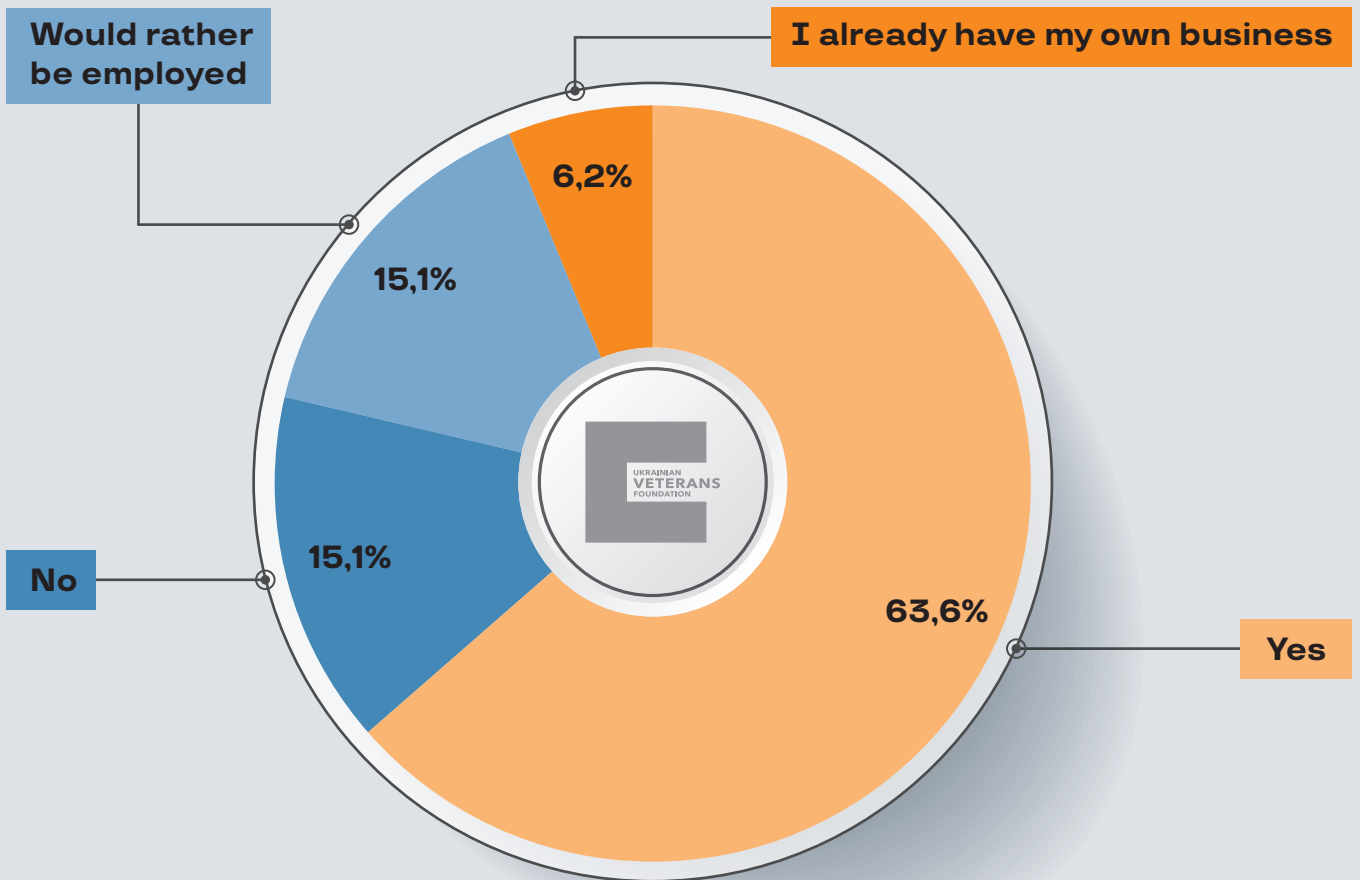
Women veterans participating in the focus groups shared their experiences and challenges related to obtaining material benefits and their strategic importance. Specifically, volunteers still face difficulties as they may lack the necessary documentation from military units to prove their direct participation in combat operations in order to qualify for material benefits. According to the women veterans, overall, military personnel and veterans are poorly informed about the existing benefits, especially older individuals living in rural and remote areas away from major cities. The focus group participants noted that it is crucial to adhere to the benefits already established by law. The state has provided a significant number of benefits for veterans and their families, which can pose a significant burden on the state budget in today's realities. In the opinion of the women veterans, the government should focus on the benefits that directly relate to the veterans' adaptation to their environment, particularly the workplace. This includes transportation, wheelchairs, and other mobility aids for individuals with limited mobility or disabilities, as well as prosthetics, the creation of job opportunities, and possibilities for retraining. The veterans pointed out that one of the reasons employers are reluctant to hire disabled veterans is the need to adapt the workplace to accommodate the specific needs of such employees, which Ukrainian employers are often unwilling to invest time and money into.

RESOCIALIZATION OF VETERANS THROUGH EMPLOYMENT IN CIVILIAN LIFE

Survey results

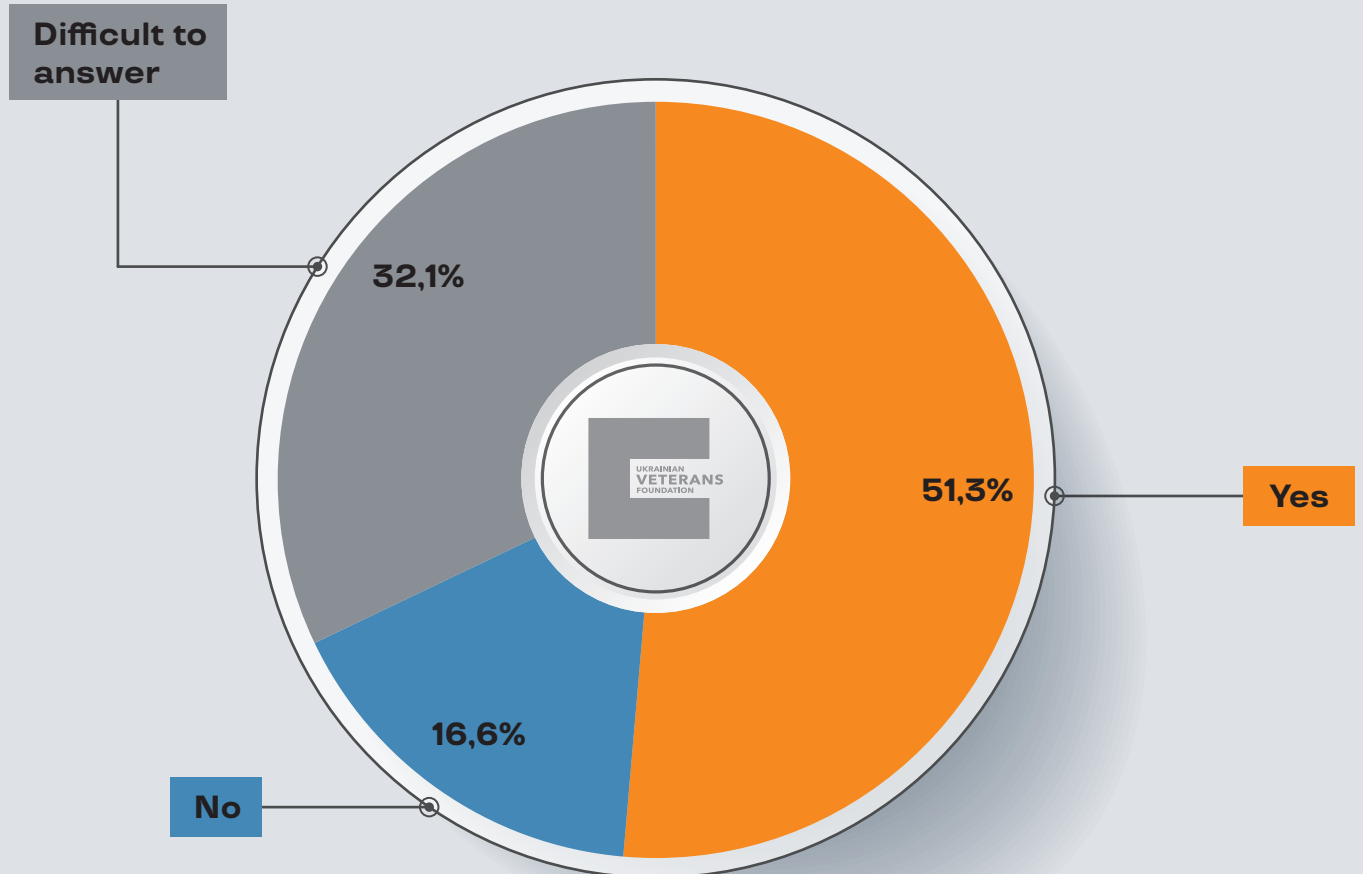
63,6% of the respondents answered affirmatively to the question "Would you like to engage in your own business, entrepreneurship?" indicating that they would definitely like to. 15,1% of the respondents stated that they definitely would not want to pursue their own business, while another 15,1% expressed a preference for being employed, with 6,2% of them already having their own business.

Would you like to engage in your own business, entrepreneurship?

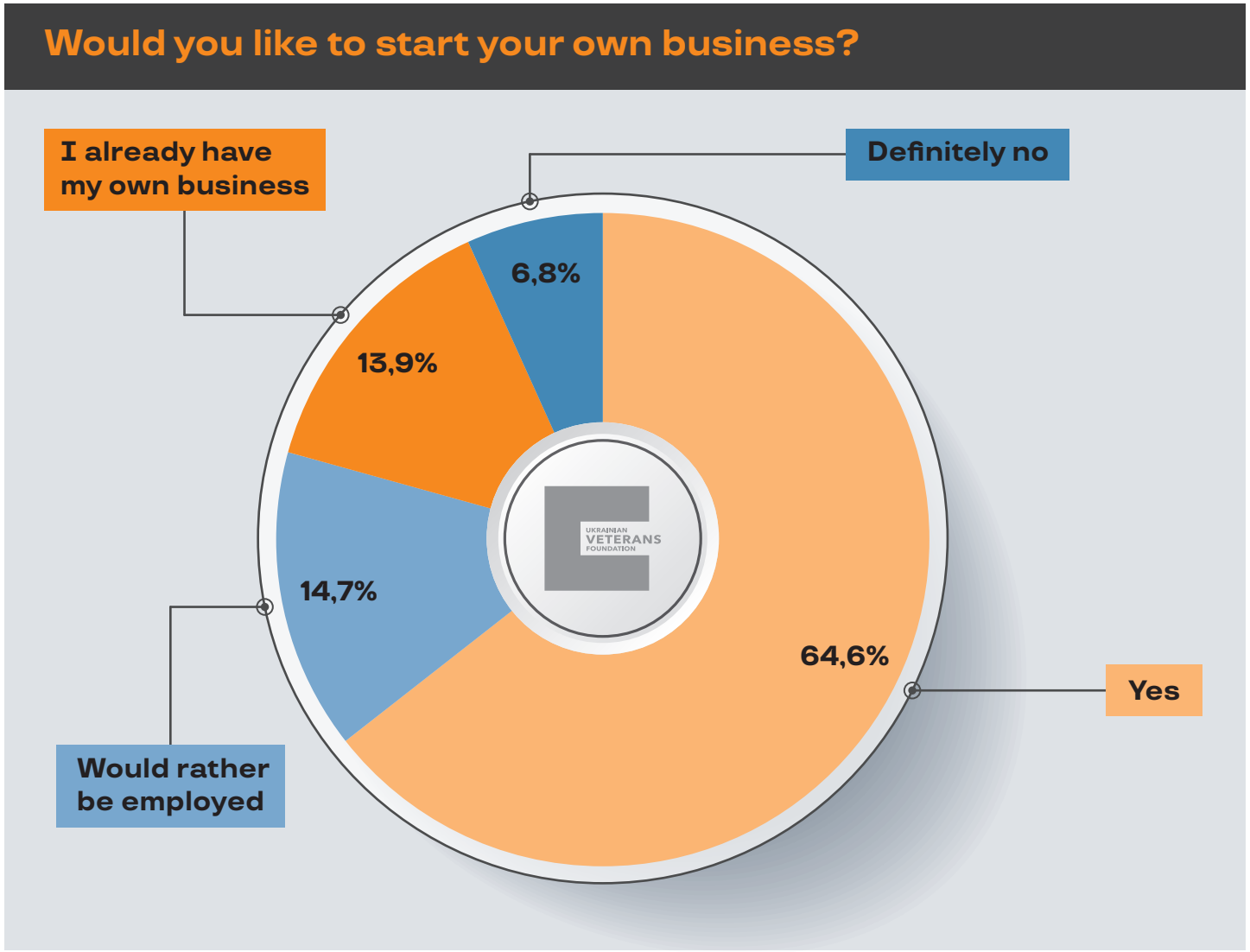


According to the survey of military personnel, an absolute majority of the respondents (51.3%) plan to return to their work/education after the Victory. However, 16.6% gave a negative answer, and for the rest of the respondents, it was difficult to provide a clear answer to this question.

Do you plan to return to your work/education after the Victory?

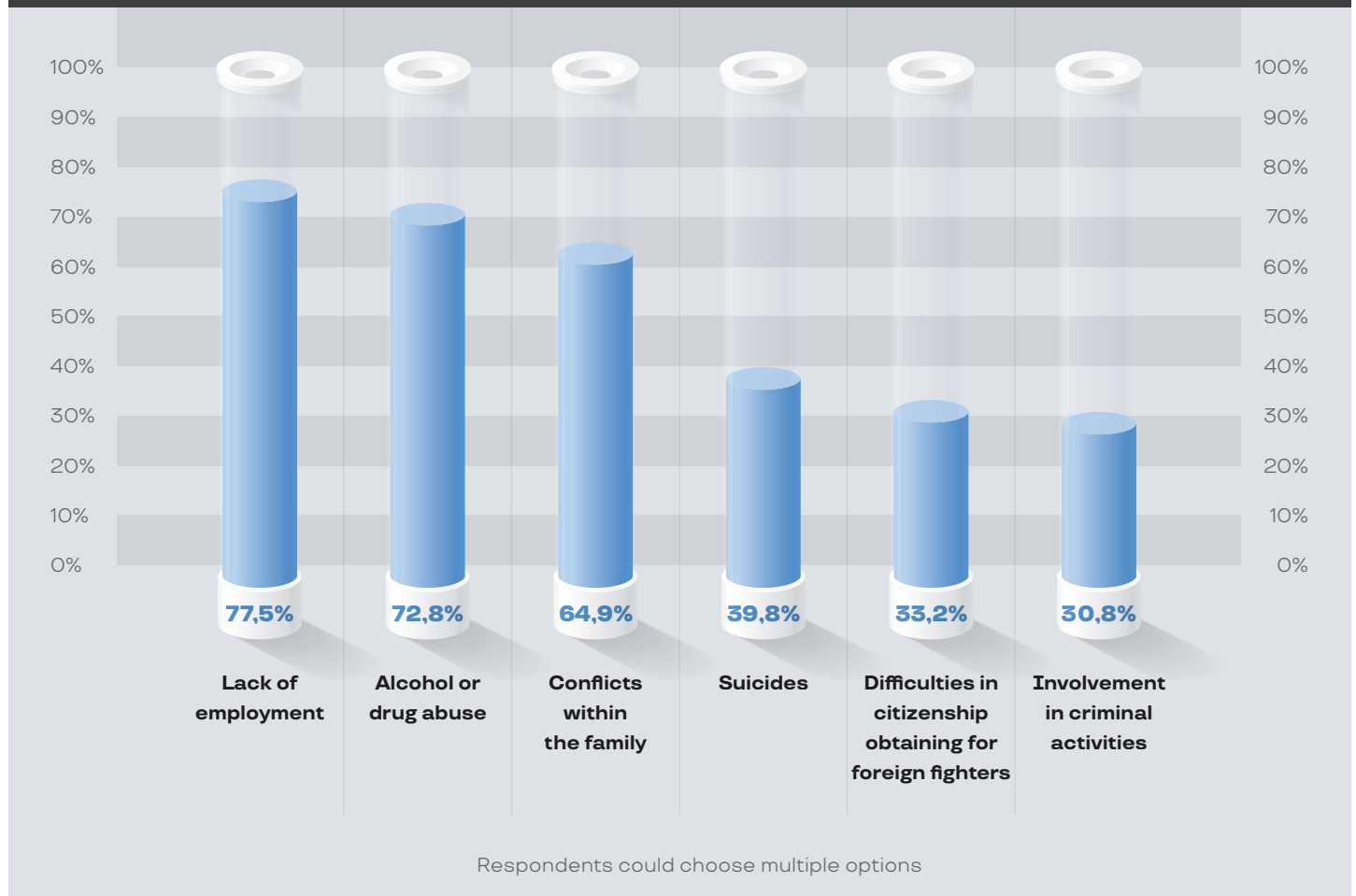


In response to the question "Would you like to engage in your own business, entrepreneurship?" approximately 65% of the surveyed active military personnel chose the option "definitely would like to." Around 14% indicated that they already have their own business. At the same time, 14.8% of respondents believe that they are better off being employed as workers, and 6.8% definitely do not want to be involved in their own business.



In response to the question "What are the likely problems that veterans returning from the Russian-Ukrainian war will face?" respondents had the opportunity to choose multiple answer options. According to the respondents, the most probable problems are: lack of employment (77.5%), alcohol or drug abuse (72.8%), and conflicts within the family (69.4%). Approximately 30-40% of the respondents also mentioned issues such as suicides, difficulties in obtaining Ukrainian citizenship (for foreign participants in combat actions), and involvement in criminal activities as problems that may arise.

In your opinion, which of the following problems will veterans returning from the Russian-Ukrainian war face?



The results obtained in this survey correlate with the results of the January survey of the population of Ukraine conducted by the Sociological Group "Rating."⁵⁷ Family conflicts, unemployment, and substance abuse, such as alcohol or drugs, have been and remain key issues that veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war may likely face upon their return home, as more than half of the respondents in both surveys believe.

⁵⁷ The Twentieth Nationwide Survey: Perception of Veterans in Ukrainian Society (January 14-16, 2023) [Online resource] // Sociological Group "Rating." [Online resource] // Sociological group "Rating". – 2023. – Access mode: https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/dvadcyate_zagalnonac_onalne_opituvanny_ukra_na_p_d_chas_v_yni_obraz_veteran_v_v_ukra_nskomu_susp_lst.html

Results of focus groups

One of the question blocks for veterans in the focus groups was focused on the topic of employment for veterans in civilian life. Within this block, veterans answered questions regarding the problems/obstacles in the field of employment and career development that veterans of war face, ideas for veteran entrepreneurship and its prospects in Ukraine, and the employment needs of veterans that could be addressed by the government and society.

Among the problems/obstacles emphasized by veterans in terms of employment, the following are particularly mentioned:

1. Unwillingness of employers to hire veterans. According to the participants of the focus groups, this can be attributed to certain privileges for veterans in the field of employment, such as additional leave, which makes veterans less cost-effective as employees.

2. Lack of opportunities for retraining. Focus group participants criticized the ineffective work of Employment Centers and the lack of relevant opportunities for acquiring a new profession after military service.

3. Personal changes experienced by participants in combat. As veterans pointed out, military personnel are exposed to a restricted environment and extreme conditions during war, which leads to a reassessment of values, change in priorities, and expansion of personal boundaries. These personal changes can manifest in the unwillingness to continue working as an employee or to remain in a job that has not brought satisfaction so far.

When answering the question, "What can the government do for the professional development of veterans?" veterans provided several possible solutions according to their opinion:

- On a state level, employers should be obligated to provide a certain number of reserved job positions for veterans;
- Providing state preferences, particularly through government orders, for companies that employ veterans;
- Establishing specialized centers for veterans where they can receive assistance in obtaining benefits and other services, including help with employment;
- Providing preferential financing for veterans who wish to start and develop their own businesses and create job opportunities for other veterans.

According to the participants of the focus group, veterans can find fulfillment in any field that interests them. They perceive employment, personal and career development as integral elements of re-socialization, transitioning from military service to civilian life, and post-conflict recovery. In this context, veterans react positively to opportunities for developing veteran-owned businesses and find value in public projects related to coaching, project management, and mentorship for veterans.

Female veterans

When discussing the employment of veterans in civilian life, the participants of the focus group emphasized the need for creating conditions to enhance the qualifications and retraining of veterans, especially for medical professionals. They also highlighted the importance of granting deferrals for combatants who are required to register with the Employment Center immediately after their discharge. According to the female veterans, the government should ensure proper training for employment center staff on how to communicate effectively and understand the needs of veterans. Additionally, veterans require opportunities for retraining and changing professions that have lost significance, become unprofitable, or uninteresting during their involvement in combat actions. One potential direction for professional realization among veterans, as suggested by the focus group participants, is engagement with private military companies, particularly providing training and instructions for foreign military units.

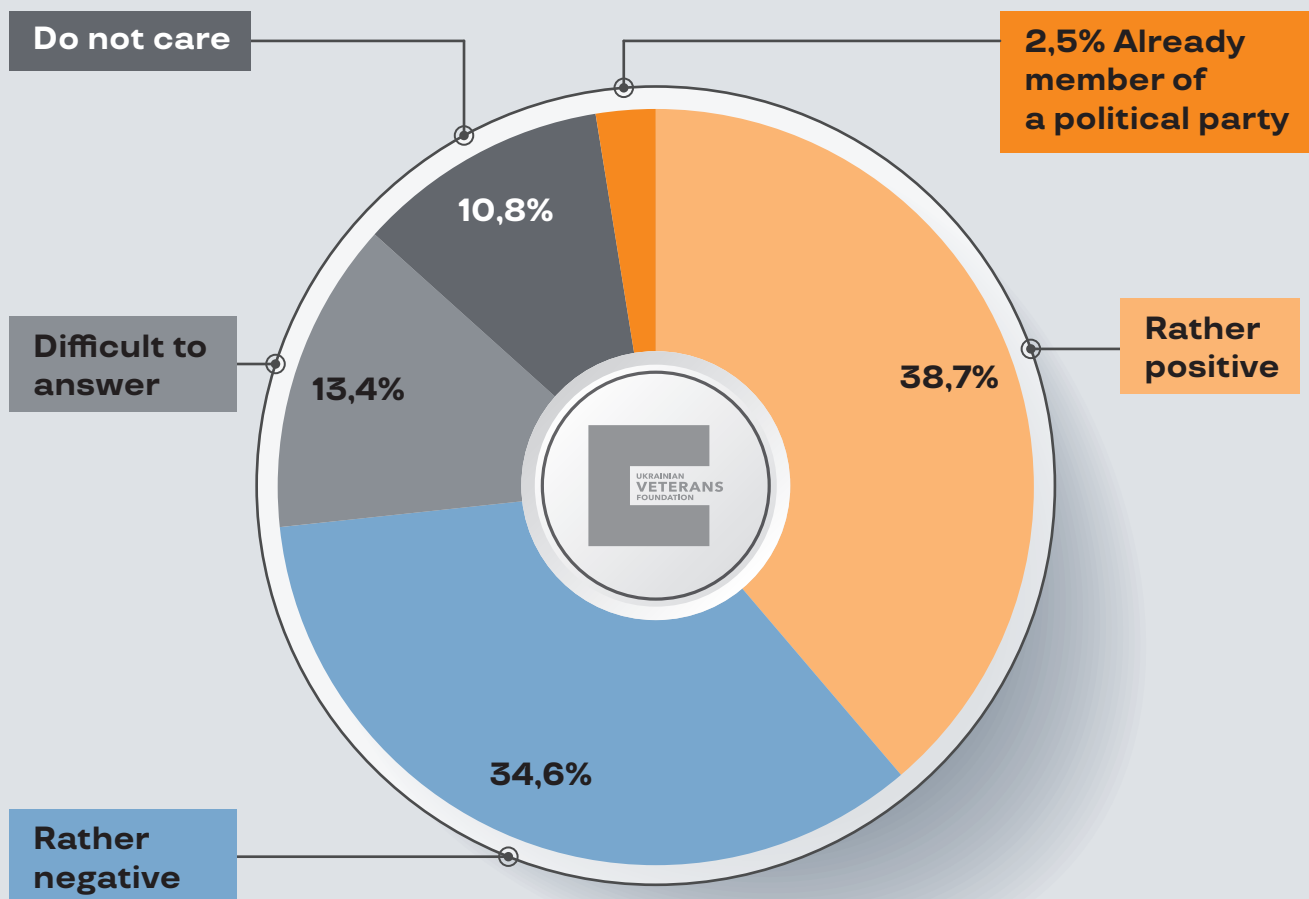
According to the female veterans, society, in turn, should be concerned about creating a comfortable work environment for veterans at the level of recruiters in civilian organizations and adapt the workspace for people with disabilities. All participants of the focus group have a positive attitude towards the development of veteran-owned businesses and consider this form of support for veterans highly relevant. One participant expressed her opinion as follows: **"I don't think that support for veteran-owned businesses should only be provided to those who have suffered a physical disability or lost their vision. If someone had a business before the war or they want to realize themselves in business now, let them do it. This support should already be in place."**

THE ATTITUDE OF MALE AND FEMALE VETERANS TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN ARMS IN VARIOUS POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

Survey results

The question "How do you feel about different political parties inviting veterans to run in elections?" became one of the most controversial. The responses from the respondents were mostly polarized. Approximately 38.7% of them had a rather positive attitude towards such opportunities, while 34.6% leaned more towards a negative stance. Around 11% of the respondents remained indifferent to this question, and 13.4% found it difficult to provide a definitive answer. Additionally, 2.5% of the respondents indicated that they were already members of a political party.

How do you feel about different political parties inviting veterans to run in elections?



In general, both in this survey and in the survey of the population of Ukraine by the "Rating" Group⁵⁸ in January, the majority of respondents in both surveys responded positively to the possibility of veterans participating in elections on behalf of different political forces. However, approximately one-third of the respondents in both surveys held a contrary position.

Results of focus groups

Overall, all veterans agreed that in one way or another, veterans will be invited to join various political forces after the war, primarily for publicity and expanding their audience. However, veterans participating in the focus group presented several key points: "Politicians should learn" and "being a good soldier does not mean being a good politician." Justifying their opinion, veterans cited numerous examples of former high-ranking military officers who, upon entering politics, lost the trust and respect of the military.

Regarding the participation of veterans in electoral processes and voting in their favor, focus group participants noted that it depends on the personal qualities and actions of each individual. **"If a person is personally reliable, I emphasize, then they can achieve something or help in politics. Without the veterans' movement, no political force can do without it,"** added one of the veterans. Another participant in the focus group expressed the opinion that being a military veteran does not guarantee that a person is respectable, morally principled, or intelligent. **"I am more inclined to believe that most people endowed with such qualities gradually disappear. And now, more and more, only those who were caught in a net somewhere under the subway or in a nightclub remain,"** noted one of the veteran participants.

When answering the question, "Is it possible for veterans to unite to create their own political force?" veterans emphasized that, in their opinion, Ukrainian voters tend to vote for individual politicians rather than parties. As one focus group participant pointed out, **"Our society is uneven, and military servicemen reflect the people. Veterans are people who came from the war. Each person lived their war, each person emerged from this war differently, with various psychological, physical, and other consequences."** Taking this into account, veterans found it difficult to envision the possibility of creating a unified political force of veterans that would enjoy society's support.

At the same time, focus group participants observed a certain radicalism in the expression of civic positions and speculated that it might alienate society during Ukraine's post-war recovery. Specifically, the surveyed veterans felt the need for more authoritarian methods of governance in post-conflict Ukraine to overcome corruption, oligarchy, and impunity. Anticipating possible developments, one veteran expressed their opinion as follows: **"I see that there will be two cards to play. Either we, as military personnel, tighten the screws, take a totalitarian direction, engage in purges, and so on. Or the position will be 'we have had enough of this war,' 'everyone wants to breathe fresh air,' 'how much can we talk about veterans and volunteers? Let's live!' Depending on the trends and how much money is invested in it, such a political agenda will be successful. So, will there be veteran political initiatives? Yes, there will be. Will they be composed entirely of military personnel? No, they won't. Because the veterans' community tends toward radicalism, and this raises certain fears in society."**

⁵⁸ The Twentieth Nationwide Survey: Perception of Veterans in Ukrainian Society (January 14-16, 2023) [Online resource] // Sociological Group "Rating." [Online resource] // Sociological group "Rating". – 2023. – Access mode: https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/dvadcyate_zagalnonac_onalne_opituvanny_ukra_na_p_d_chas_v_yni_obraz_veteran_v_v_ukra_nskomu_susp_lst.html

Жінки-ветеранки

Discussing the participation of veterans in political life within different political forces, the opinions of female veterans were divided. According to one side of the discussion, people should enter politics and support all the initiatives of veterans, as without it, there will be no changes in the state. At the same time, veteran politicians, more than anyone else, understand the needs of the veteran community and are capable of promoting and defending the interests of veterans and their families in the political arena. **"In my opinion, it is very easy to break people when they are a minority. Veterans should enter politics, but at the local level, where a person feels more protected. That is, we need to change something at the grassroots level, rather than going to places where you are just one soldier in the field, where they can persuade and intimidate you,"** expressed one of the participants in the focus group. On the other side of the discussion, politics is seen as toxic and tarnishing the reputation of anyone who enters it.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



After conducting a comprehensive study of the needs of veterans through anonymous online surveys of veterans and military personnel, as well as conducting in-depth focused interviews with veterans, we have identified the following indicators:

■ About half of the surveyed veterans and military personnel believe that the state does not fulfill its obligations to veterans. Taking into account the results of the survey conducted by the Sociological Group "Rating," a general trend of increasing negative assessments of the state's performance of its obligations to veterans can be observed.

■ The absolute majority of surveyed military personnel and veterans believe that Ukrainian society respects veterans (52.2% - rather respects + 9.5% - definitely respects). In a January survey of the Ukrainian population by the "Rating" Group, the absolute majority (91%) also believed that society respects veterans today, although the share of those who hold the opposite opinion was significantly lower.

■ Among the most pressing needs, respondents identified assistance in strengthening health (53.8%), assistance in acquiring housing (34.7%), financial support (31.1%), assistance in improving living conditions (24.9%), education (24.4%), employment (20.4%), receiving psychological support (20%), entrepreneurial investments (20%), and receiving land privileges (16.4%).

■ When asked about the services that veterans are most satisfied with, the majority of respondents highlighted utility subsidies (48%), free transportation (32.9%), and pensions (22.7%). The most dissatisfied were with medical services (48.9%), financial assistance (25.8%), pensions (24%), and psychological rehabilitation (20.4%).

■ The overwhelming majority of respondents (63.6%) expressed a desire to engage in their own business and entrepreneurship, while 6.2% already have their own business.

■ According to the respondents' opinions, the most likely problems that veterans will face after the war are unemployment (77.5%), alcohol or drug abuse (72.8%), conflicts in the family (69.4%). About 30-40% of respondents also mentioned problems such as suicides, difficulties in obtaining Ukrainian citizenship (for foreigners who participated in hostilities), and violations of laws and involvement in criminal activities.

■ Military personnel and veterans have different views on possible invitations for veterans to run for elections. 38.7% are rather positive about such opportunities, while 34.6% are rather negative. At the same time, 2.5% of the respondents indicated that they are already members of a political party.

Expanding on the survey data, through conducting focus groups, we identified key crisis areas in meeting the needs of veterans. Based on these areas, we grouped the main problems and obstacles voiced by veterans that they encounter in civilian life.

According to the direction of medical care, the participants of the focus group of male veterans identified such problems and obstacles as: The low quality and lack of sanatorium and resort treatment services; the shortage of opportunities and absence of a transparent system for prosthetics benefits in Ukraine; the lack of a clear and transparent system for the treatment of complex injuries/illnesses abroad; the shortage of specialized experts for treating PTSD and blast injuries; the absence of inclusive and barrier-free spaces in cities and villages in Ukraine. According to veterans, due to the war and additional funding of healthcare institutions for military personnel and veterans, the quality of services, particularly in hospitals, is higher than in civilian medical facilities. The situation is expected to worsen after the end of the war: "most people after demobilization will have health problems and will turn to civilian healthcare institutions that are unable to provide them with an adequate level of medical assistance." Additionally, female veterans mentioned the following issues: lack

of necessary conditions (lack of separate rooms) for the inpatient treatment of female service members in hospitals and maternity homes; absence of benefits for assisted reproductive technology (ART) for veterans who lost the ability to have children due to participation in combat actions; lack of opportunities for free psychotherapeutic counseling for military personnel and veterans, shortage of centers for psychological rehabilitation; absence of benefits for breast implantation for women with breast injuries.

According to the direction of registration and use of benefits by veterans, problems and obstacles were identified as: The bureaucratic and non-unified procedure for obtaining benefits in different regions; the "human factor" or the lack of understanding among social workers regarding the specifics of working with combatants and their communication skills, taking into account their experience. In turn, female veterans emphasized issues with: informing veterans about their entitlements; non-compliance with legislation regarding veterans' benefits by local executive authorities.

According to the direction of employment, veterans single out the following problems: The reluctance of employers to hire veterans; lack of opportunities for retraining; personal changes experienced by combatants. Female veterans, on their part, drew attention to issues such as: lack of opportunities for qualification improvement/retraining for medical professionals after discharge; absence of requirements and standards for workplace adaptation for the employment of people with disabilities.

Veterans consider the following to be manifestations of disrespect from the state: Numerous bureaucratic procedures in obtaining benefits for veterans and a lack of rehabilitation centers that could assist veterans in physical and psychological recovery. At the same time, veterans consider **the following to be a manifestations of disrespect from society:** Non-compliance with the requirements of preferential legislation, particularly regarding land benefits and discounted transportation for veterans; undermining the role of female veterans in the fight against Russian aggression; aggressive, disrespectful, and demeaning rhetoric towards veterans, particularly during their interactions with healthcare facilities, employment centers, and social welfare institutions.

In turn, **as direct manifestations of self-respect, veterans perceive:** The direct range of benefits for veterans, which are legislatively established, and the preferential opportunities in private healthcare facilities and others, created by the initiatives of the institution owners. Overall, veterans note that the level of disrespect increases as the level of danger decreases. While the general level of respect for veterans in society has significantly increased compared to 2015, in certain territories where direct armed aggression from the enemy is no longer imminent, the level of respect has decreased over the past year.

As a result of anonymous online surveys and discussions in focus groups, we were able to **confirm the following research hypotheses:**

- 1 Veterans in Ukraine face manifestations of disrespect when accessing preferential services.** As evidence, veterans provide examples of incidents where healthcare, social services, and executive authorities displayed disdainful attitudes towards their needs and entitlement to benefits.
- 2 Veterans lack information about healthcare benefits, particularly regarding state programs for physical, psychological rehabilitation, and prosthetics.** Veterans argue that the absence of clear and transparent procedures for participating in domestic and international rehabilitation programs, coupled with a general lack of legal awareness among Ukrainian citizens regarding their rights and opportunities, contribute to this problem.
- 3 The majority of veterans hold negative views on the effectiveness of the state's support policy for veterans.** Based on the participation of veterans and female veterans in surveys and focus groups, they assess the effectiveness of the state's support policy through the lens of the problems they encounter when accessing benefits. These include bureaucratic and non-unified application processes, corruption issues, and veterans' lack of awareness about their entitlements, which collectively render the state's veterans policy insufficiently effective.
- 4 One of the major obstacles to meeting veterans' needs is bureaucracy at the local level and within executive authorities.** Both male and female veterans mentioned difficulties in obtaining benefits in various regions, particularly in town and city communities. This includes issues related to land privileges and the annual one-time payment process.

In the course of the research, **the hypothesis** that one of the most pressing needs of veterans is financial assistance for themselves and their families **was disproven**. Instead, during the discussions in focus groups, veterans, both male and female, focused on the needs for physical and psychological rehabilitation, as well as on the needs for reintegration and socialization in society by creating opportunities for self-development, education, and employment after military service. The hypothesis regarding the "possible negative consequences of veterans' involvement in electoral processes from different political forces, leading to the compromise of the veteran's image in the perception of Ukrainian society" could neither be disproven nor confirmed, given the significant diversity of opinions regarding veterans' membership in different political forces and participation in electoral processes. According to veterans' views, military service or combat experience is not a guarantee of effective performance in political positions, and based on previous experiences, the majority of military personnel who became politicians tarnished their own image through their actions. On the other hand, female veterans believe that the participation of veterans in local-level political processes can contribute to positive changes in the country and create opportunities for advocating the rights of the veteran community in the Ukrainian political sphere.

During the focus groups, veterans presented potential solutions to the challenges they face in accessing benefits. **Based on their suggestions, the following recommendations were formulated:**

- 1 To ensure a broader range of services and rehabilitation tools for veterans, establish clear and accessible treatment, prosthetics, and rehabilitation conditions for veterans abroad, with an open database of facilities and prosthetic programs, along with a corresponding register of candidates eligible for these services.
- 2 Create preferential programs for assisted reproductive technologies (ART) for female military personnel, female veterans, and other women affected by war who have lost their reproductive function due to injuries, trauma, or illnesses sustained during combat.
- 3 Provide opportunities for psychological rehabilitation for veterans and their partners as a couple, based on psychological rehabilitation centers.
- 4 Improve the efficiency of the benefits delivery system for veterans and minimize corruption in the benefits application process, it is necessary to establish official specialized paid support services for veterans in partnership with or based on relevant government institutions. The provision of support services for veterans, including assistance with benefits application and other services such as employment assistance, can be expanded into specialized centers for veterans, where veterans can access assistance under one roof.
- 5 Strengthen information campaigns on veterans' benefits, particularly in remote rural areas, and provide special government support and media attention to benefits related to the direct adaptation of veterans to their environment, including inclusive transportation, wheelchairs, and other mobility aids for people with disabilities, as well as prosthetics.
- 6 Establish uniform standards and requirements for mandatory workplace adaptation for people with disabilities, including veterans.
- 7 Expand opportunities for social reintegration and adaptation of veterans, create conditions for employment and self-employment for veterans by mandating employers at the national level to provide a legislatively defined percentage of reserved job positions for veterans. Additionally, to encourage employers to create job opportunities for veterans, provide state incentives, including government contracts for businesses that employ veterans.

- 8** Stimulate the self-sufficiency, personal and career development of veterans, and strengthen the medium business sector in Ukraine, provide preferential financing for veterans who wish to start and develop their own businesses and create job opportunities for other veterans.
- 9** Create expanded opportunities for the upskilling and reskilling of veterans, particularly for veteran medics, and provide opportunities for practice, internships, and employment in their new qualifications.
- 10** Support the social adaptation of discharged combat veterans, establish a legal option to defer the requirement of registering with the Employment Center for Military Personnel Discharged from Service and Granted Combatant Status.
- 11** Reduce social tension and minimize the potential for retraumatization of war veterans, organize training on working with veterans for employees of employment centers and social protection institutions. This will equip them with skills for non-violent communication and a deeper understanding of veterans' needs when serving them.

REFERENCES

1. Features of functional recovery in servicemen after traumatic brain injury combined with blast injury [Online resource] // Zaporizhzhia Medical Journal. 2020. Vol. 22, No. 3(120). pp. 329-337. – Access mode: <http://zmj.zsmu.edu.ua/article/view/204905/206005>
2. Annexation [Online resource] // Dictionary of foreign words.– Access mode: <https://www.jnsm.com.ua/c-gi-bin/u/book/sis.pl?Qry=%C0%ED%E5%EA%F1%B3%FF>
3. Law of Ukraine “On the Legal Regime of Martial Law” [Online resource] // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. – 2015. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/389-19#Text>
4. What does general mobilization mean and who will be conscripted [Online resource] // АрміяINFORM – 2022 – Access mode: <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/02/24/shho-oznachaye-zagalna-mobilizacziya-ta-kogo-pryzyvatymut>
5. Community reintegration // Webster’s New World Law Dictionary. [Online resource]. – Режим доступу: <http://www.yourdictionary.com/dictionary-definitions>
6. Law of Ukraine “On National Security of Ukraine” [Online resource] // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. – 2018. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2469-19#Text>
7. Law of Ukraine “On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection” [Online resource] // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. –1993.– Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3551-12#Text>
8. Analytical study “Portrait of a Veteran of the Russian-Ukrainian War 2014-2022” [Online resource] // Ukrainian Veterans Foundation. – Access mode: https://veteranfund.com.ua/opportunity/portret_veterana
9. The number of veterans and family members of the deceased may increase to 5 million after the war – Ministry of Veterans Affairs [Online resource] // Hromadske Telebachennya.. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://hromadske.ua/posts/kilkist-veteraniv-ta-chleniv-simej-zagiblih-mozhe-zrosti-do-5-mln-pislya-vijni-minveteraniv>
10. Resolution of December 5, 2018, No. 1021 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2018. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1021-2018-n#Text>
11. Analysis of the regulatory impact of the draft resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of November 29, 2022, No. 1338 [Online resource] // Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. – 2020. – Access mode: <https://www.drs.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/3764-4.pdf>
12. Resolution of November 29, 2022, No. 1338 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1338-2022-%D0%BF#Text>
13. Resolution of July 12, 2017, No. 497 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2017. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/497-2017-n#Text>
14. Resolution of April 5, 2012, No. 321 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2012. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/321-2012-%D0%BF#Text>
15. Law of Ukraine “On the State Budget of Ukraine for 2023” [Online resource] // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. – 2023. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2710-20#n135>
16. Resolution of April 29, 2016, No. 336 [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. – 2016. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/336-2016-%D0%BF#n10>
17. Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Social and Legal Protection of Servicemen and their Family Members” regarding the Appointment and Payment of One-time Financial Assistance.” [Online resource] // The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine – 2022. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2489-20#Text>
18. “Guarantees and benefits” [Online resource] // “E-Veteran Platform” – Access mode: <https://eveteran.gov.ua/benefits>
19. The Law of Ukraine “On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection” can be accessed online on the website of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. – Access mode: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3551-12#Text>

20. The Ministry of Veterans Affairs has formed a working group for the development of the law "On the Basic Principles of State Veterans Policy" and invites experts and scientists to participate. [Online resource] // Government Portal. – 2023. – Access mode: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/minveteraniv-stvorylo-robochu-hrupu-shchodo-rozrobky-zakonu-pro-osnovni-zasady-derzhavnoi-veteranskoi-polityky-ta-zaproshuie-do-uchasti-ekspertiv-i-naukovtsiv>

21. Order dated March 14, 2023, No. 221-r "On Approval of the Priority Actions Plan of the Government for 2023" [Online resource] // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.. – 2023. – Access mode: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/n-pas/pro-zatverdzhennia-planu-priorityetnykh-dii-uriadu-na-2023-rik-221r-140323>

22. Annual Business Survey Release Provides Data on Minority-Owned, Veteran-Owned and Women-Owned Businesses [Online resource] // Census Bureau. – 2021. – Access mode: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/annual-business-survey.html>

23. The Strategy for our veterans. Valuade. Contributing. Supported [Online resource] // the Secretary of State for Defence by Command of Her Majesty. – 2018. – Access mode: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755915/Strategy_for_our_Veterans_FINAL_08.11.18_WEB.pdf

24. Support for UK Veterans [Online resource] // The Commons Library. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7693/CBP-7693.pdf>

25. Statistics [Online resource] // Career Transition Partnership. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://www.ctp.org.uk>

26. Ministarstvo hrvatskih branitelja [Online resource] // Zakon o ustrojstvu i djelokrugu ministarstava i drugih središnjih tijela državne uprave. – 2016 – Access mode: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2016_10_93_1969.html

27. Croatia Registers Over 3,000 More War Veterans During Pandemic [Online resource] // Balkan Transitional Justice. – 2021. – Access mode: <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/12/13/croatia-registers-over-3000-more-war-veterans-during-pandemic>

28. 2021 Census will help deliver better outcomes for veterans [Online resource] // Australian Bureau of Statistics. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/2021-census-will-help-deliver-better-outcomes-veterans>

29. What Medical Benefits are Available for Veterans and Their Families? [Online resource] // Benefits.gov. – 2021. – Access mode: <https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/429>

30. Veterans Factsheet 2020 [Online resource] // The Office for Veterans' Affairs. – 2020. – Access mode: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874821/6.6409_CO_Armed-Forces_Veterans-Factsheet_v9_web.pdf

31. Canadian Veterans with Disabilities, 2017 [Online resource] // Statistics Canada. – 2019. – Access mode: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2019077-eng.htm>

32. Veterans Independence Program [Online resource] // The Royal Canadian Legion – Access mode: <https://www.on.legion.ca/veterans-seniors/service-officers/veterans-independence-program>

33. Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant [Online resource] // Australian Government – Access mode: <https://recognition.dva.gov.au>

34. VA Loans [Online resource] // Military.com – Access mode: <https://www.military.com/money/va-loans>

35. The ex-Service community [Online resource] // Royal British Legion. – 2014. – Access mode: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/things-to-do/campaigns-policy-and-research/policy-and-research/the-uk-ex-service-community-a-household-survey>

36. Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports) [Online resource] // London Datastore – Access mode: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

37. Veterans Factsheet 2020 [Online resource] // The Office for Veterans' Affairs. – 2020. – Access mode: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874821/6.6409_CO_Armed-Forces_Veterans-Factsheet_v9_web.pdf

38. Financial programs and services [Online resource] // Government of Canada – Access mode: <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/financial-support>

39. Croatian veterans' and their families' rights [Online resource] // e-Citizens Information and Services – Access mode: <https://gov.hr/en/other-croatian-veterans-and-their-families-rights/290>

- 40.** Boots to Business [Online resource] // U.S. Small Business Administration – Access mode: <https://www.sba.gov/sba-learning-platform/boots-business>
- 41.** Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) program [Online resource] // U.S. Small Business Administration – Access mode: <https://www.sba.gov/local-assistance/resource-partners/veterans-business-outreach-center-vboc-program>
- 42.** Supporting the goals and ideals of “National Veterans Small Business Week”. [Online resource] // 117th Congress – Access mode: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-resolution/1453?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Veterans%27+Business%22%2C%22Veterans%27%22%2C%22Business%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=24>
- 43.** US Department of Labor – Veterans' Employment and Training Service [Online resource] // Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs – Access mode: <https://www.in.gov/dva/veterans-services/us-department-of-labor-veterans-employment-and-training-service>
- 44.** Veterans' Employment and Training Service [Online resource] // US Department of Labor – Access mode: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/about/advisorycommittee>
- 45.** Veterans Factsheet 2020 [Online resource] // The Office for Veterans' Affairs. – 2020. – Access mode: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874821/6.6409_CO_Armed-Forces_Veterans-Factsheet_v9_web.pdf
- 46.** What Support is Available for Military Veterans Starting a Business? [Online resource] – Access mode: <https://www.companydebt.com/what-support-is-available-for-military-veterans-starting-a-business>
- 47.** Support for Military Veterans Starting a Business in Canada [Online resource] // Company Debt – Access mode: <https://www.companydebt.com/support-for-military-veterans-starting-a-business-in-canada>
- 48.** The Defence Force Transition Program (DFTP) [Online resource] Access mode: <https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/transition/coaching-and-support/defence-force-transition-program>
- 49.** WAR VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: VETERANS' COOPERATIVES IN CROATIA [Online resource] // Proceedings of the 6th International Conference “An Enterprise Odyssey: Corporate governance and public policy – path to sustainable future”. – 2012. – Access mode: https://bib.irb.hr/datoteka/612450.Peor-da_Gregov_Vrhovski_2012_Weterans_entrepreneurship.pdf
- 50.** Government grants and loans for entrepreneurs in Croatia: Guide for 2023 [Online resource] // Expat in Croatia. – 2022. – Access mode: <https://www.expatincroatia.com/government-grants-loans-entrepreneurs>
- 51.** The Twentieth Nationwide Survey: Perception of Veterans in Ukrainian Society (January 14-16, 2023) [Online resource] // Sociological Group “Rating.” [Online resource] // Sociological group “Rating”. – 2023. – Access mode: https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/dvadcyate_zagalnonac_onalne_opituvanny_ukra_na_p_d_chas_v_yni_obraz_veteran_v_v_ukra_nskomu_susp_lst.html

Cover photo

© Dmytro Kozatskyi

Photo at the beginning of the sections

© Stas Kozliuk, Oleh Tiutiunov

Design, layout & infographics

Oles Oliinyk



© Ukrainian Veterans Foundation
2023 Kyiv