

COUNTY OF **SAN MATEO**
HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

VETERANS NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND OUTREACH STUDY REPORT

VERSION 1.0

June 2021



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- About the Researcher 1
- Table of Figures 7
- Acknowledgments..... 10
 - 1.0 County of San Mateo Veterans Commission 10
 - 2.0 County of San Mateo LGBTQ Commission..... 10
 - 3.0 County of San Mateo Commission on the Status of Women 11
 - 4.0 County of San Mateo Commission on Aging..... 11
 - 5.0 California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVET)..... 11
 - 6.0 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 12
 - A. VA Central Office (VACO) 12
 - B. VA Integrated Service Network 21 (VISN 21)..... 12
 - C. VA Palo Alto Health Care System 12
 - D. San Francisco VA Health Care System..... 12
 - 7.0 Veteran Service Organizations..... 12
 - 8.0 Stakeholders 13
 - 9.0 County of San Mateo 13
 - A. Department of Health..... 13
 - B. Department of Housing 13
 - C. San Mateo County Superior Court And Veterans Treatment CouRT 14
 - D. San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office 14
 - 10.0 Staff Support 14
 - A. Human Services Agency 14
 - B. County Veterans Services Office 14
- Executive Summary..... 15
 - 1.0 Key Takeaways from the Study 16

A.	Key Takeaways from the Veteran Demographic Report.....	16
B.	Key Takeaways from Communitywide Veteran Survey	16
C.	Key Takeaways from the Veteran Service Provider Survey	17
D.	Key Takeaways from Focus Groups and Stakeholder Interviews	17
	Introduction: Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study.....	19
	Veteran Demographic report.....	20
1.0	Population.....	20
2.0	Population by Region	22
3.0	Period of Service	23
4.0	Age	24
5.0	Race and Ethnicity.....	25
6.0	Gender	27
A.	Gender Identity	28
	Housing and Homelessness	29
1.0	Housing	29
A.	Homeowners.....	29
B.	Renters.....	31
C.	Homelessness.....	32
2.0	San Mateo County Continuum of Care	33
	Education and Employment.....	42
1.0	Education	43
2.0	Employment.....	44
3.0	Income	45
	Basic Needs and Social Supports	46
1.0	Public Assistance.....	46
A.	CalFresh.....	47
B.	CalWorks	47

C.	General Assistance (GA).....	48
D.	Medi-Cal.....	48
Veteran Benefits Administration		49
1.0	Veteran Benefit Claims	50
2.0	Veteran Benefit Expenditures.....	50
3.0	CalVet.....	51
A.	California Transition Assistance Program (CaITAP).....	51
4.0	County Veteran Service Officers	52
A.	San Mateo County CVSO.....	53
5.0	Education Benefits	53
6.0	VA Cemeteries.....	54
Health and Well-being		55
1.0	Veterans Health Administration	55
A.	VA Palo Alto Health Care System	55
B.	San Francisco VA Health Care System.....	61
2.0	Service-Connected Disability Status	61
3.0	Substance Use Disorders.....	62
4.0	Trauma and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	62
5.0	Depression and Suicide	63
6.0	County of San Mateo Health Department.....	63
A.	San Mateo Medical Center (SMMC)	64
B.	Health Care for Homeless/Farmworker Health Program	64
7.0	San Mateo County LGBTQ+ Community and COVID-19	64
Criminal Justice		65
1.0	San Mateo County Veterans Treatment Court	65
2.0	San Mateo County Jail.....	66
Veteran Needs Assessment Methodology.....		67

1.0	Communitywide Veteran Survey	67
A.	Demographics of Survey Respondents	68
B.	Veteran Services and Benefits	74
C.	Veteran and Non-veteran perceptions of Service Access.....	75
D.	Gender and Sexual identity.....	77
2.0	Communitywide Veteran Service Provider Survey	83
A.	Description of providers.....	83
B.	Populations Served	87
C.	Services Provision	90
D.	Outreach	94
E.	Assessment of Service Provision.....	95
3.0	Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups	114
A.	Stakeholder Interviews	114
B.	Focus Groups.....	119
	Key Takeaways and Recommendations.....	123
1.0	Key Veteran Demographic Trends	123
2.0	Key Veteran Needs and Gaps in Services.....	123
A.	Veterans Needs Assessment Survey and Veteran Service Provider Survey	123
B.	Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups	124
3.0	Barriers to Accessing Services.....	125
4.0	Recommendations For Outreach and Engagement.....	125
	Next Steps	126
1.0	Strengthening Collaboration.....	126
2.0	Improving Outreach and Lowering BARRiers to Service Access.....	126
3.0	Enhancing Opportunities for Engagement.....	127
	Appendices.....	128
1.0	Methodology.....	128

A. Veteran Needs Assessment Survey Questions 128

B. Veteran Service Provider Survey Questions 140

C. Focus Group Framework..... 151

D. Stakeholder Interview Framework 152

2.0 Glossary of Acronyms 154

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Veteran and Non-Veteran Adult Population Estimates, Bay Area Counties, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.....	20
Figure 2: Veteran and Non-Veteran Adult Population Estimates as Percent of Total Population, Bay Area Counties, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates	21
Figure 3: Veteran Population Projection Model, San Mateo County, 2018-2048	22
Figure 4: Percentage of the Population as Veterans by Region, San Mateo County, 2014 compared to 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates	23
Figure 5: Proportion of the Veteran Adult Population by Period of Military Service, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates	24
Figure 6: Adult Population Age Distribution by Veteran Status, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.....	25
Figure 7: Population by Race by Veteran Status, San Mateo County, 2018 5-Year Estimates	26
Figure 8: Population by Race by Veteran Status, San Mateo County, 2018 5-Year Estimates	26
Figure 9: Veteran Status by Age and Gender, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.....	28
Figure 10: Home Values in Quarter 3, Zillow, 2014-2020.....	30
Figure 11: Veteran Family CES Scores compared to Non-Veteran Family CES Scores, San Mateo County, 2014-2020	37
Figure 12: Veteran Individual CES Scores compared to All Individual CES Scores, San Mateo County, 2014-2020	37
Figure 13: Veteran and Overall Homelessness by Chronicity, San Mateo County, 2014-2020	39
Figure 14: Percent of Total Veterans Served by CoC Program by Age, San Mateo County, 2020.....	40
Figure 15: Percent of Total Veterans Served by CoC Program by Race and Ethnicity, San Mateo County, 2020	41
Figure 16: Percent of Total Veterans Served by CoC Program by Gender, San Mateo County, 2020.....	41
Figure 17: Percent of Total Veterans Served by CoC Program by Disability Type, San Mateo County, 2020	42
Figure 18: Educational Attainment by Veteran Status, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates ..	43

Figure 19: Median Annual Income by Veteran Status and Gender, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.....	45
Figure 20: Number of Veterans Served by San Mateo County HSA Programs Based on Self-Report, 2014-2019	47
Figure 21: Percent of Total Veterans Utilizing San Mateo County HSA Programs by Program Type, 2014-2020	49
Figure 22: VA Summary of Expenditures, San Mateo County, 2014-2019	50
Figure 23: Average Age of the VAPAHCS Enrollees by Year, San Mateo County, VAPAHCS FY 2014 -2020	57
Figure 24: Proportion of the VAPAHCS Enrollees by Period of Military Service, San Mateo County, VAPAHCS FY 2014 -2020 Data.....	59
Figure 25: Veterans Living, Working, or Attending School in San Mateo County	68
Figure 26: Connection to Military Service.....	69
Figure 27: Period of Military Service.....	70
Figure 28: Highest Level of Education Completed	70
Figure 29: Respondent Age.....	72
Figure 30: Annual Household Income.....	73
Figure 31: What is your race and ethnicity?	73
Figure 32: How familiar are you with the San Mateo County Veterans Services Office (CVSO)?	76
Figure 33: Gender Identity of 492 Respondents.....	78
Figure 34: If you are disabled but not receiving service-connected compensation, please tell us why. Please check all that apply.....	82
Figure 35: Respondents to the Veteran Service Provider Survey	84
Figure 36: In which county is your organization and/or program located?	84
Figure 37: What is your level of familiarity with the County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) in San Mateo County?	85
Figure 38: Which of these veterans' organizations have you contacted at any time?.....	86
Figure 39: How does your organization receive funding to provide veteran services?	86
Figure 40: Service Population	88
Figure 41: What are the eligibility requirements for your services or programs?	89

Figure 42: If veterans (including anyone who has ever served in the U.S. military) or their families are not eligible for your organization’s program’s services, what is the most frequent reason for their ineligibility? 90

Figure 43: How frequently often do your veteran clients typically receive services from your organization? 92

Figure 44: Where do veterans typically receive services from your organization? 92

Figure 45: How long do you typically serve individual veteran clients or veteran families? 93

Figure 46: What do you find is the most effective way of connecting with the veterans or the families that you serve? 94

Figure 47: To what degree are each of these health care related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or who are veterans? 95

Figure 48: Which of these health care related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve? 97

Figure 49: To what degree are each of these housing related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or who are veterans? 98

Figure 50: Which of these housing related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve? 100

Figure 51: To what degree are each of these benefit needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans? 101

Figure 52: To what degree are each of these benefit needs, if any, met for the veterans you serve? 102

Figure 53: To what degree are each of these employment related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans? 104

Figure 54: To what degree are each of these employment related needs, if any, met for the veterans you serve? 106

Figure 55: If the needs of the veterans or veteran families you serve are either partially met or not being met, please tell us why? 111

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2014, the County of San Mateo engaged a contractor to complete a comprehensive county-wide veterans need assessment and to present their findings at the County's First Veterans Summit in November 2014. As a result of the summit, recommendations were made to increase services provided to veterans, increase outreach and education on veterans' benefits, create a veterans advisory group, develop a housing locator program to secure housing for homeless veterans, and work with partners to provide additional housing options for veterans. The County allocated Measure K funding to support the implementation of various veterans' initiatives.

The County of San Mateo Veterans Commission (SMCVC) was created by the County Board of Supervisors on June 2, 2015, to promote programs and policies that address the unmet needs of veterans and their dependents in San Mateo County. The SMCVC identified the following goals in their 2019 Strategic Plan:

- Develop an increased understanding of the current needs of San Mateo County veterans and their families.
- Develop and maintain a current, comprehensive, and accessible online catalog of all
- relevant services available to SMC veterans and their families.
- Ensure that all San Mateo County Veterans and their families are aware of the services available to them and understand how they can access those services.

In order to achieve these goals, the Veterans Commission requires current demographic information for the San Mateo County veteran community, information on the needs of these veterans, and a comprehensive understanding of the services available to veterans in our community as well as gaps or challenges veterans and their families face in accessing those services. To that end, the San Mateo County Human Services Agency, Collaborative Community Outcomes Branch, and the County Veterans Services Office (CVSO) launched the Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study in coordination with the SMCVC in the fall of 2020.

The Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study is a comprehensive county-wide assessment aimed at better understanding the needs of people who have ever served in the U.S. military and their families, as well as available services and the gaps in services for veterans who live or work in San Mateo County. The information and analysis provided by the Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study will be used to better understand the existing service needs and gaps, and to inform recommendations for better meeting the needs of our community's veterans and their families.

Findings from this study will be used to develop strategies to assist veterans and their families in better accessing the services available to them, strengthen collaboration across the public and private sectors, and to help create a multi-channel marketing campaign to engage veterans and improve veteran awareness of CVSO and other veteran services in San Mateo County.

1.0 KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE STUDY

Key findings and takeaways from the Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study include the following:

A. KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE VETERAN DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT

- San Mateo County's total population has increased by 4.6 percent, while the veteran population has decreased by 16.1 percent according to 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
- The regional distribution of veterans within San Mateo County is primarily concentrated in North County and Mid-County, as 69.9 percent of San Mateo County's estimated veteran population resides in these two regions.
- The largest proportion of San Mateo County veterans (34.1 percent) served in the Vietnam-era, a slightly higher percentage than in 2014 when 31.6 percent of veterans served during this time period.
- In San Mateo County, the veteran population is significantly older than the overall population. According to 2018 ACS 5-year Estimates, while only 19.5 percent of the non-veteran population are over the age of 65, 58.4 percent of the estimated veteran population are over age 65.
- The veteran population in San Mateo County is approximately 93.6 percent male and 6.4 percent female, however, an increasingly higher percentage of younger veterans are female.

B. KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM COMMUNITYWIDE VETERAN SURVEY

- Both service providers and veterans agree that the greatest barrier to unmet service needs are lack of awareness or clarity regarding what services are available and where to get assistance.
- There may be an opportunity for a peer-to-peer network of volunteers that can spread information and create more community connection.
- One-third of all respondents who are closely connected to veterans but are not veterans themselves have never heard of the CVSOS; this represents an additional key audience to market CVSOS services.
- Veterans thought public benefits and employment related needs were amongst the least met needs. Employment difficulty is echoed in the open choice responses in which veterans wrote about the difficulty in working with career services in more non-traditional fields or fields that require degrees.
- Veterans who identified as women are less sure about where to receive assistance, 41 percent of veterans who identified as women versus 31 percent of veterans who identified as men were unsure where to receive assistance. Veterans who identified as women are also less

likely to use public benefits but more likely to receive services from the VA, mostly due to a higher percentage of veterans who identify as women having a disability rating.

- LGBTQ+ veterans are likely underserved by the resources available. The services asked about included assistance finding employment, connecting with LGBTQ+ activities, social networking, or support, and housing needs as an LGBTQ+ veteran.

C. KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE VETERAN SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY

- Veteran service providers are more optimistic about the ability to meet the needs of veterans than were veterans who responded to the Veterans Needs Assessment Survey.
- Half of service providers surveyed work with veterans experiencing homelessness. As such, many of the open-ended questions on barriers to services focus on the need for affordable housing and other acute needs.
- In asking about how providers are collaborating, service providers indicate that they most often contacted the CVSO, followed by the Peninsula Vet Center, to help coordinate services for veterans and their families.
- Veterans and service providers agree that healthcare related needs were amongst the top “always met” needs, especially medical or physical health care services and prescription medicine.
- Veteran service providers indicate that they thought that direct and general referrals were the most effective means of connecting to the veterans they served.

D. KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

As part of the needs assessment process, Civix conducted six stakeholder interviews with those working on behalf of veterans and their families in San Mateo County, as well as three focus groups dedicated to veteran sub-populations including veterans who are women, veterans who identify as LGBTQ+, and Post 9/11 veterans.

Stakeholder interviews and focus groups were conducted between March 2021 and May 2021. Participants across the stakeholder interviews and focus groups highlighted several areas to increase access to services for veterans in San Mateo County:

- First, interviewees and focus group participants largely agreed that there is need for increased outreach and engagement to the veteran population in San Mateo County, and their families, to increase awareness of the services and benefits available to them through organizations like the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and CVSO.
- Participants noted that access to mental health services, housing opportunities, and services addressing veteran homelessness were some of the most common issues affecting the

veteran population San Mateo County. Tied to the lack of access to mental health services was a lack of knowledge about what services are available to veterans.

- Last, participants suggested that greater collaboration between veteran health care and hospital systems and other veteran service organizations is needed to increase awareness of services and reduce barriers to accessing them.

INTRODUCTION: VETERANS NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND OUTREACH STUDY

The San Mateo County Human Services Agency, Collaborative Community Outcomes Branch, and the County Veterans Services Office (CVSO) launched the Veteran Needs Assessment and Outreach Study in coordination with the Veterans Commission in the fall of 2020. The Veteran Needs Assessment and Outreach Study is a comprehensive county-wide assessment aimed at better understanding the needs of people who have ever served in the U.S. military and their families, as well as available services and the gaps in services for veterans who live or work in San Mateo County.

The Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study included four key activities designed to learn more about the needs of veterans and their families:

1. **Veteran Demographic Report:** Compilation of a broad Veteran Demographic Report providing updated data on key demographics for the veteran population in San Mateo County. This report expands upon data included in the 2014 needs assessment process.
2. **Communitywide Veteran Survey:** Distribution and analysis of a communitywide survey targeted to those who have ever served in the U.S. military and their families, as well as available services and the gaps in services for veterans who live, work, or attend school in San Mateo County.
3. **Communitywide Veteran Service Provider Survey:** Distribution and analysis of a communitywide survey targeted to organizations and programs serving San Mateo County that provide services to or focus on those who have ever served in the U.S. military and their families.
4. **Focus Groups and Stakeholder Interviews:** Focus Groups and stakeholder interviews were conducted virtually with a variety of individual and organizational stakeholders who live, work, or attend school in San Mateo County.

This report explores the needs assessment activities conducted to-date, the data collected through each of these activities, and it provides an analysis of the service needs and barriers faced by those who have ever served in the U.S. military and their families in San Mateo County.

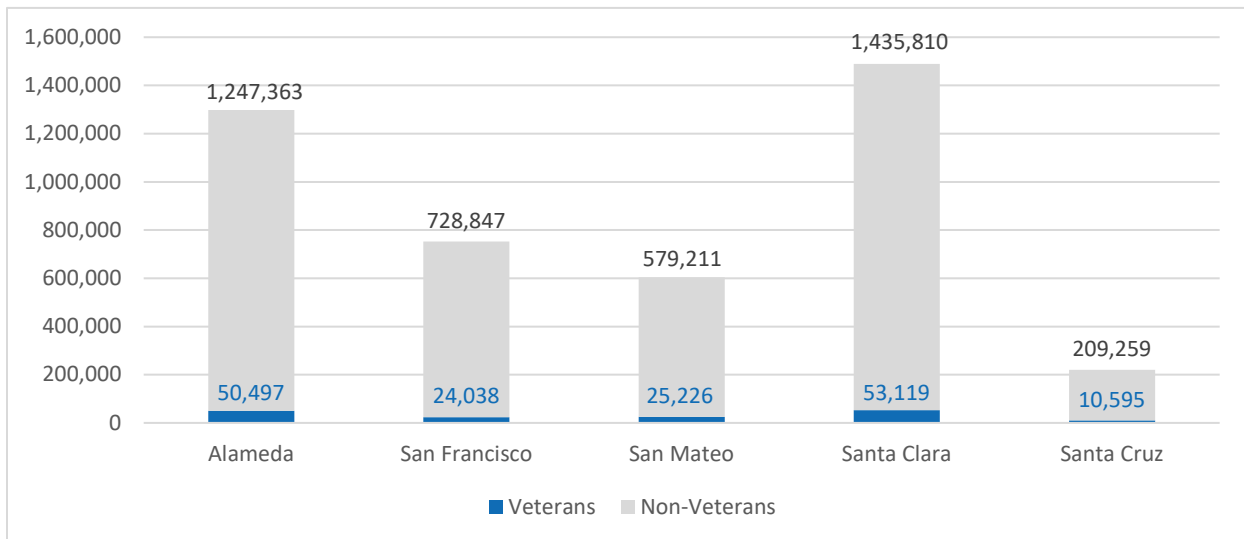
VETERAN DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT

1.0 POPULATION

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, there are approximately 18,611,432 veterans in the United States' population 18 years and over, comprising 7.5 percent of the total U.S. population. There are approximately 1,618,861 of those veterans residing in the State of California, representing about 5.4 percent of California's total population.

San Mateo County has an estimated 25,226 veterans, making up 4.2 percent of the County's total population.¹ The number of veterans and the proportion of veterans to the total population have both decreased since 2014, when those numbers were approximately 32,000 and 6 percent, respectively. San Mateo County's proportion of the veteran population 18 and over is similar to the neighboring Bay Area counties of Alameda, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz. The percent of veterans in the total population range from approximately 3 percent to 5 percent in these neighboring counties. While San Mateo County is home to a larger veteran population than San Francisco and Santa Cruz counties, Santa Clara and Alameda counties have larger veteran numbers, as can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 below.

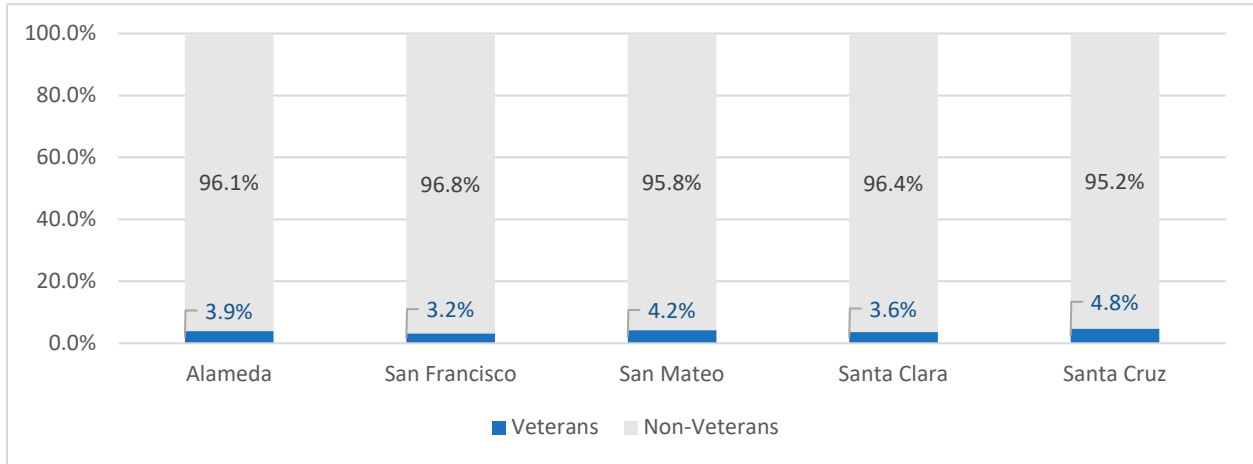
Figure 1: Veteran and Non-Veteran Adult Population Estimates, Bay Area Counties, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). S2101: Veteran Status. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

¹ 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimated range is between 24,174 and 26,278 with a margin of error +/- 1,052.

Figure 2: Veteran and Non-Veteran Adult Population Estimates as Percent of Total Population, Bay Area Counties, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates

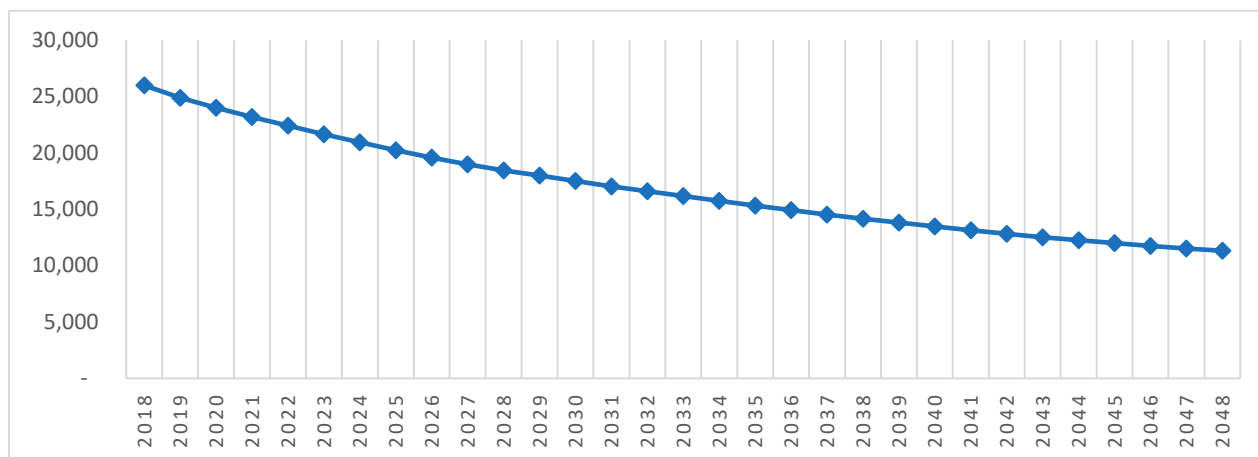


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). S2101: Veteran Status. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

While the non-veteran adult population has increased in the state of California, San Mateo County, and in all four adjacent Bay Area counties since 2014, the number and proportion of veterans in the total population have steadily decreased. In 2014, veterans comprised between 4 percent to 6 percent of the overall population in these counties, while these rates dropped between 3 percent and 5 percent by 2018. According to 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates, San Mateo County’s total population has increased by 4.6 percent, while the veteran population has decreased by 16.1 percent. This trend is mirrored by the state, as the total population has increased by 4.3 percent and the veteran population has decreased by 12 percent. According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics Veteran Population Projections 2018-2048, it is anticipated this trend will continue, with the veteran population in San Mateo County decreasing up to 56.4 percent by 2048, as shown in Figure 3. Veteran population projections for the United States similarly predict a decrease of 39.8 percent in the veteran population between 2018 to 2048.²

² U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. Veteran Population Model 2018. Retrieved 2020 va.gov/vetdata/veteran/_population.asp.

Figure 3: Veteran Population Projection Model, San Mateo County, 2018-2048



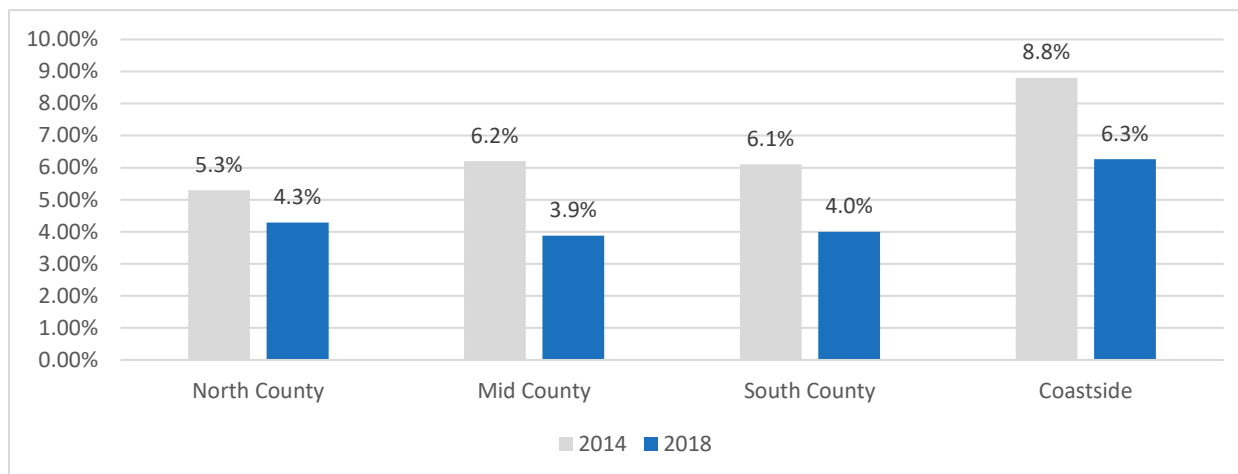
Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. Veteran Population Model 2018. Retrieved 2020 from va.gov/vetdata/veteran/_population.asp.

2.0 POPULATION BY REGION

The regional distribution of veterans within San Mateo County is primarily concentrated in North County and Mid-County, as 69.9 percent of San Mateo County’s estimated veteran population resides in these two regions. South County is home to approximately one fourth of the San Mateo County veteran population, or 24.3 percent, while the Coastside has less than 6 percent of the County’s veteran population.

The proportion of veterans to non-veterans in the total population has decreased for all four regions in San Mateo County since 2014, as can be seen in Figure 4. In 2014, veterans comprised between 5 percent and 9 percent of the total population in each region, while this range decreased to approximately 4 percent to 7 percent in 2018. This trend is reflective of veteran population changes in San Mateo County as a whole.

Figure 4: Percentage of the Population as Veterans by Region, San Mateo County, 2014 compared to 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). S2101: Veteran Status. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov. 2014 data from 2014 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment report: U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). B21001: Sex by Age by Veteran Status for the Civilian Population 18 Years and Over. 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2014 from www.factfinder2.census.gov.

In the State of California, counties with the largest veteran populations (between 50,001 and 300,000 veterans) are primarily located in southern California and include San Bernardino County, Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside County, and San Diego County. The exceptions are Santa Clara County and Sacramento County.³

3.0 PERIOD OF SERVICE

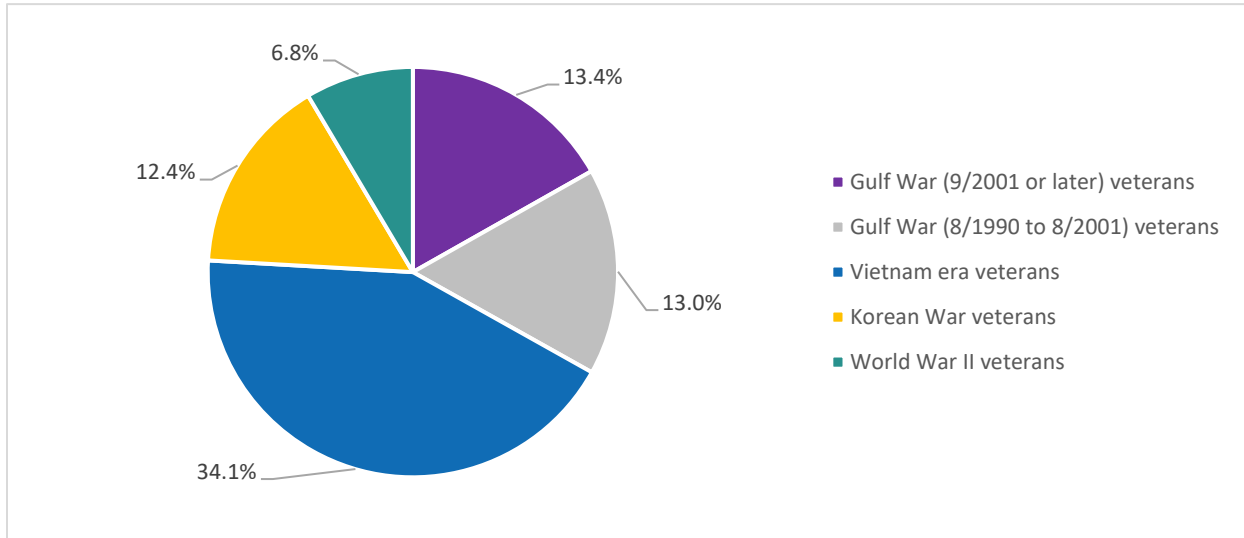
According to the U.S. Census, period or era of military service indicates the time period(s) in which people who served on active duty in the past or are currently on active duty served.⁴ This Census question does not delineate whether or not people served in active combat during their period of military of service. The largest proportion (34.1 percent) of San Mateo County veterans served in the Vietnam-era, a slightly higher percentage than in 2014 when 31.6 percent of veterans served during this time period. Since 2014, the proportion of Gulf War (from August 1990 to August 2001) veterans in San Mateo has increased from 9.9 percent in 2014 to 13 percent in 2018. Similarly, there has been an increase in veterans who served during the Gulf War era (September 2001 or later) from 8.6 percent in 2014 to 13.4 percent in 2018. The largest decrease in veteran population since 2014 has been for World War II era veterans, who comprised

³ California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. (2020). CVSO 2020 Annual Report. <https://securerusercontent.com/198.12.145.239/84d.64c.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CVSO-2020-Annual-Report-revised.pdf>

⁴ US Census Bureau. (2017, April 6). United States Census Glossary. The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/veterans/about/glossary.html>

approximately 14.8 percent of the population in 2014, but only 6.8 percent in 2018. Similar trends in period of service have occurred at both the state and national levels as well.

Figure 5: Proportion of the Veteran Adult Population by Period of Military Service, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates

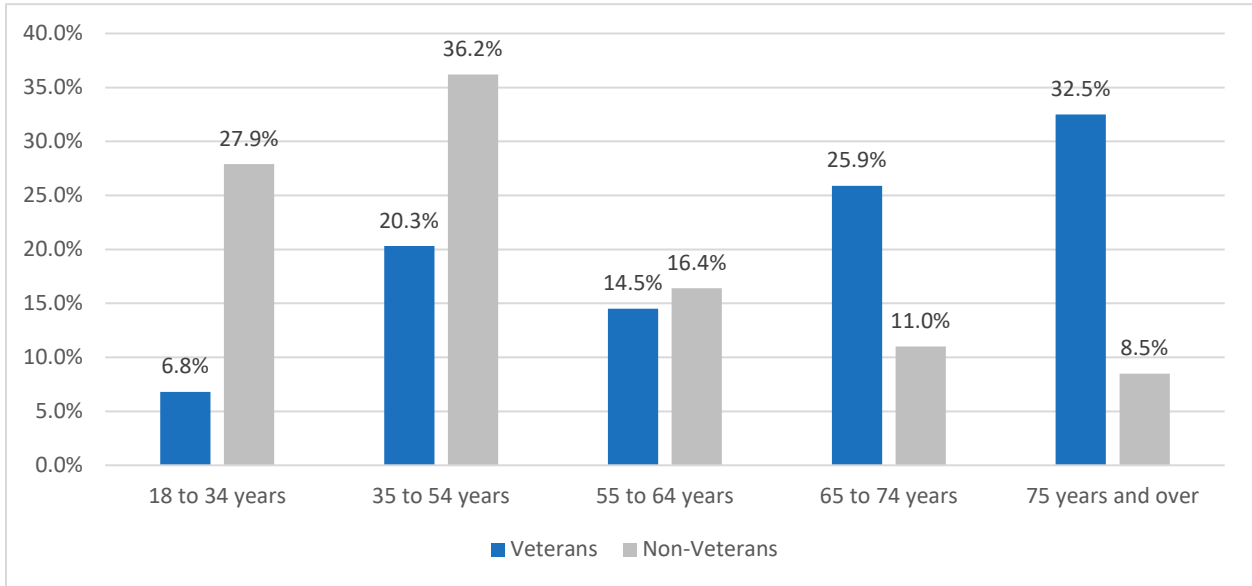


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). S2101: Veteran Status. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

4.0 AGE

In San Mateo County, the veteran population is significantly older than the overall population. According to 2018 ACS 5-year Estimates, while only 19.5 percent of the non-veteran population are over the age of 65, 58.4 percent of the estimated veteran population are over 65. There is also a stark contrast in the age 18 to 34 population when comparing veterans and non-veterans, as only 6.8 percent of San Mateo County’s veteran population falls within this age range, compared to 27.9 percent of non-veterans. The demographic data reflects that the needs of older veterans may be a key consideration for assessing and meeting the needs of veterans living, working, or attending school in San Mateo County at this time. Informed by the experience of many Vietnam-era veterans, however, there is also recognition that reaching younger veterans and those who are newly separated from military service early is important to ensure their needs are met and conditions not compounded.

Figure 6: Adult Population Age Distribution by Veteran Status, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates

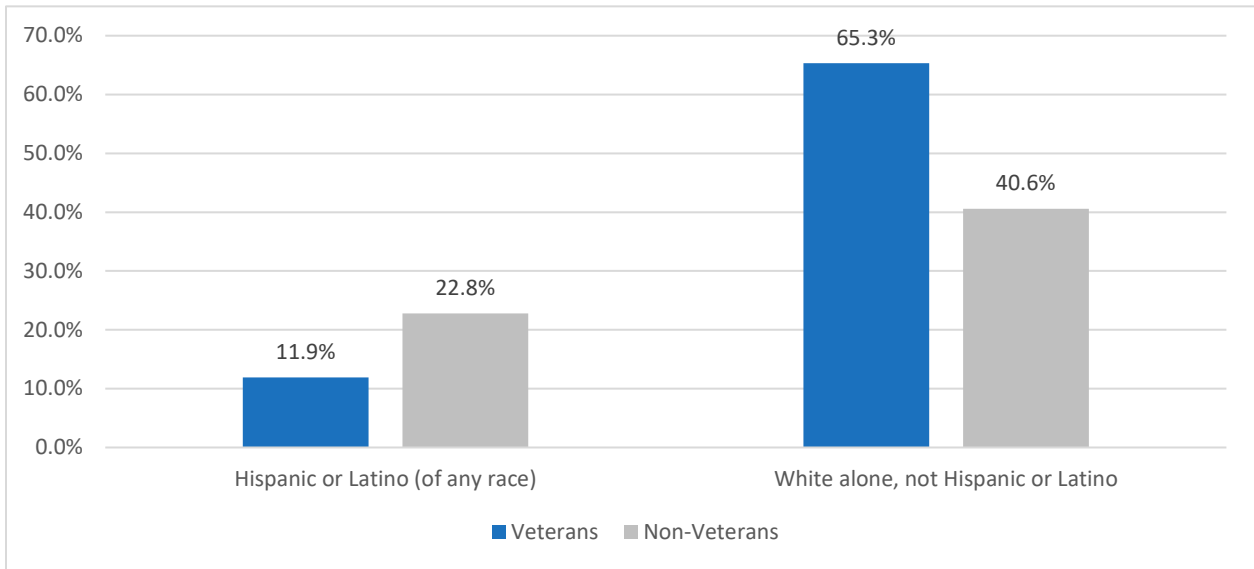


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). S2101: Veteran Status. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

5.0 RACE AND ETHNICITY

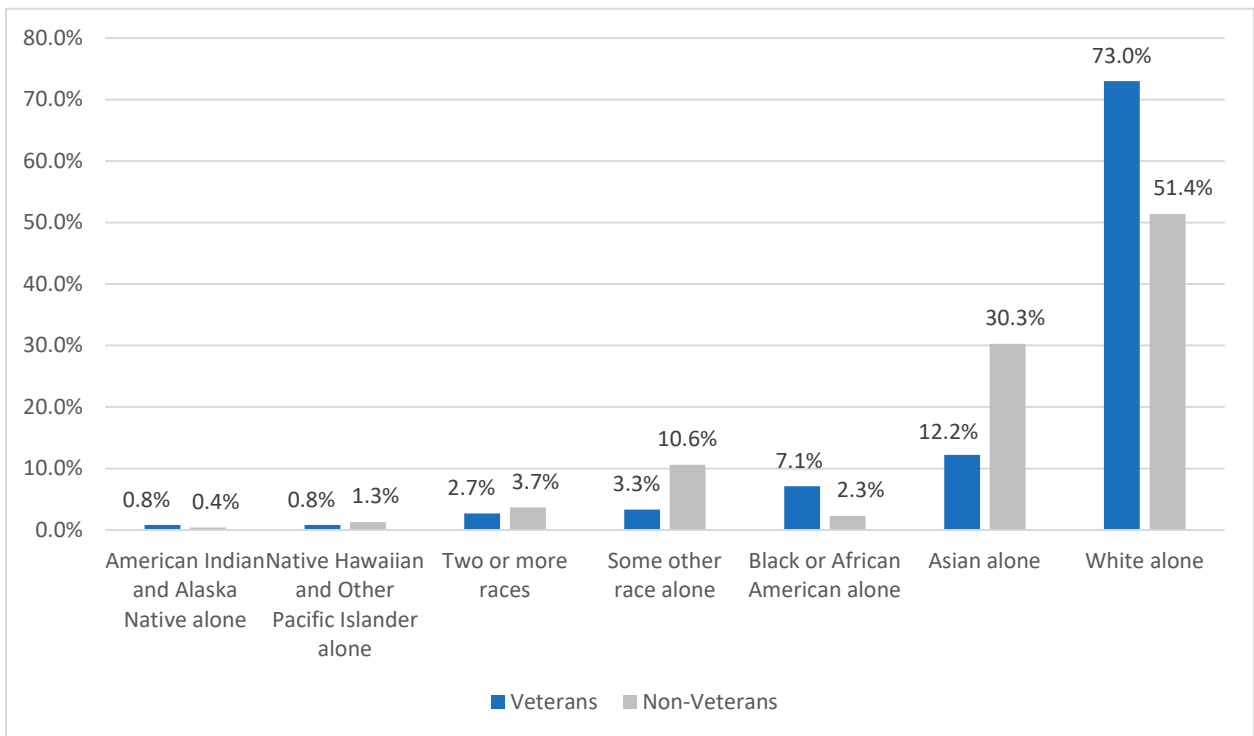
According to the 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the veteran population in San Mateo County is less ethnically and racially diverse than the non-veteran population. While an estimated 22.8 percent of the non-veteran population identify as Hispanic or Latino, only 11.9 percent of veterans who call San Mateo County home are Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 65.3 percent of the veteran population identify as White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, compared to 40.6 percent of non-veterans. While one third of the non-veteran population is Asian alone in San Mateo County (30.3 percent), only 12.2 percent of veterans are Asian alone. Veterans in San Mateo County are more likely to be Black or African American alone (7.2 percent) than non-veterans (2.3 percent), however non-veterans are more likely to be some other race alone (10.6 percent) compared to veterans (3.3 percent). Veterans and non-veterans in San Mateo have similar proportions of the population who are American Indian and Alaska Native alone, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, and two or more races alone.

Figure 7: Population by Race by Veteran Status, San Mateo County, 2018 5-Year Estimates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). S2101: Veteran Status. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

Figure 8: Population by Race by Veteran Status, San Mateo County, 2018 5-Year Estimates



6.0 GENDER

According to the United States Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service, there were approximately 1,884,000 million women veterans in the United States in 2019. Women comprise approximately 10 percent of the overall veteran population while making up 52 percent of the overall population, and thus women veterans represent approximately 1.5 percent of the overall population. Male veterans make up 14 percent of the overall population nationally, and 1 in 7 men is a veteran.⁵

In recent years, the number of women veterans has been increasing and comprised 20 percent of the overall veteran population under age 35 in the United States in 2019. The median age for women veterans (51) is also significantly younger than the median age of male veterans (65). Nationally, women veterans are twice as likely to have served during only the Gulf War II era (31 percent female versus 15 percent male), and the Gulf War I era (27 percent female and 15 percent male). However, male veterans are three times as likely as women veterans to have served in the WWII, Korean War, or Vietnam War eras.⁶

Most male and female veterans in the U.S. are White; however, women veterans are more racially and ethnically diverse than male veterans according to 2019 data. While approximately 78 percent of female veterans are White, 20 percent are Black, 10 percent are Hispanic or Latino, and 2.3 percent are Asian. Comparatively, male veterans are 84 percent White, 12 percent Black, 7 percent Hispanic, and 1.7 percent Asian.⁷

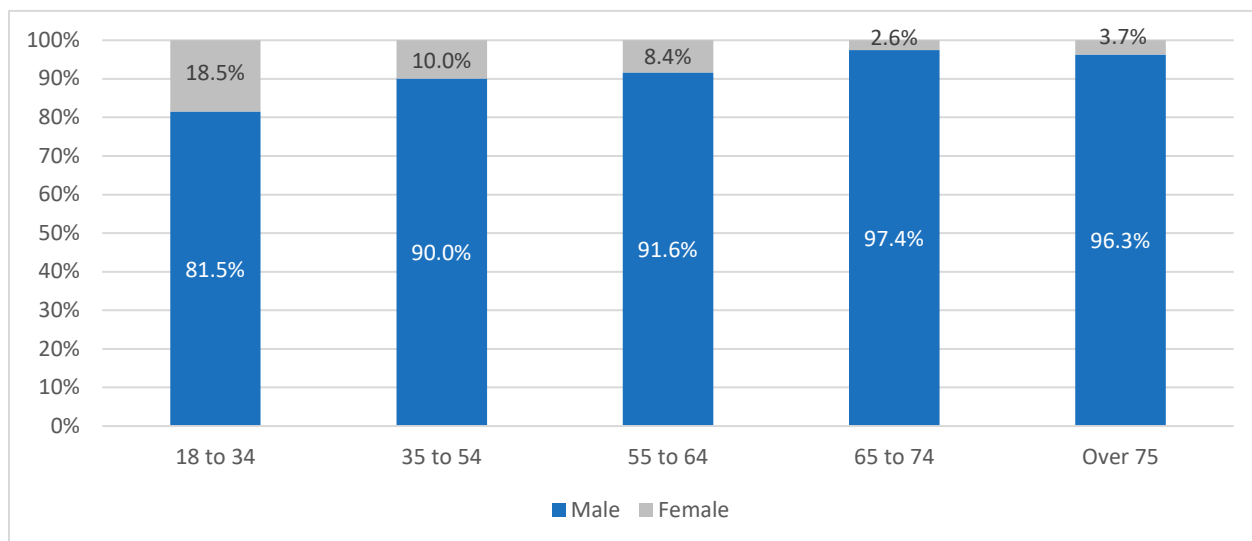
According to 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the veteran population in San Mateo County is approximately 93.6 percent male and 6.4 percent female. The proportion of women veterans in the overall San Mateo County veteran population is lower than the national proportion of 10 percent. While the estimated 2018 percentage of female veterans is still a small proportion of the overall veteran population, an increasingly higher percentage of younger veterans are female, as demonstrated in Figure 9. Since 2014, the percentage of female veterans in San Mateo County has increased slightly in the 18 to 34 age range from 17.8 percent to 18.5 percent, following national trends.

⁵ Glowacki, D. N., Veterans' Employment and Training Service, & United States Department of Labor. (2019). 2019 Gender and Veteran Demographics [Slides]. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SurveysAndStudies/VETPOP.pdf>

⁶ Glowacki, D. N., Veterans' Employment and Training Service, & United States Department of Labor. (2019). 2019 Gender and Veteran Demographics [Slides]. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SurveysAndStudies/VETPOP.pdf>

⁷ Glowacki, D. N., Veterans' Employment and Training Service, & United States Department of Labor. (2019). 2019 Gender and Veteran Demographics [Slides]. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SurveysAndStudies/VETPOP.pdf>

Figure 9: Veteran Status by Age and Gender, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). B21001: Sex by Age by Veteran Status for the Civilian Population 18 Years and Over. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

A. GENDER IDENTITY

In general, there is a lack of data reporting on non-binary gender identity and transgender identities and expression, both in the military, among veterans, and otherwise. Data sources like the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey have traditionally collected gender data by asking people if they are male or female, lacking questions that offer a complete picture of the nuances of gender identity.

In 2016, the military lifted the ban on transgender people openly serving in the military. In that same year, a RAND study estimated that between that between 1,320 and 6,630 transgender service members are in the active duty military, while between 830 and 4,160 members are in reserves duty.

To understand more about the demographics of veterans in San Mateo County in terms of gender identity, the communitywide Veteran Needs Assessment Survey asked respondents “What is your current gender identity?” and provided the following answer choices: “man,” “woman,” “genderqueer or genderfluid,” “non-binary,” “questioning or unsure,” “two-spirit,” “prefer not to disclose,” and “additional or other gender category/identity not listed.” The options “man,” “woman,” and “prefer not to disclose” were the only answer options selected by survey respondents.

To better understand the gender identity and related needs of veterans in San Mateo County, the Veterans Needs Assessment Survey also asked the following: “Do you identify as transgender?” and provided the following answer choices: “yes,” “no,” and “prefer not to disclose.” Only a small number of veteran respondents to the survey answered that they identify as transgender. Communitywide survey responses are discussed in more detail in sub-section “D. Gender and Sexuality” of the Veterans Needs Assessment analysis contained in this report.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

1.0 HOUSING

The affordability of housing is one of the biggest challenges facing California residents, particularly households that call the San Francisco Bay Area and San Mateo County home. Table 1 provides an overview of housing characteristics for San Mateo County, based on the 2018 American Community Survey- 5-Year Estimates. While the 2018 estimates provide a useful overview of San Mateo County’s housing characteristics, the changing nature of the region’s housing market necessitates collection of more recent data, which can be found on the following pages.

Table 1: Housing Characteristics, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Characteristics	Number/Percentage
Owner-Occupied Units	59.9%
Renter-Occupied Units	40.1%
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units	\$994,100
Median Gross Monthly Rent	\$2,158
Rent Burdened Households (Gross Rent as Percentage of Household Income over 30 percent)	49%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

A. HOMEOWNERS

Home ownership has long been considered one of the fundamental ways American households build wealth over time. Almost 60 percent of residents in San Mateo County own their home, according to 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, compared to 54.6 percent of California residents and 63.8 percent in the U.S. overall.⁸ While the percentage of San Mateo County residents who own their homes has remained stable since 2014, the cost of both for-sale and rental housing has continuously and steeply increased.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. data.census.gov

The California Association of Realtors developed a Traditional Housing Affordability Index (HAI), which measures the percentage of households that can afford to purchase the median priced home in California's regions, based on traditional assumptions. This HAI is considered one of the most fundamental measures of housing well-being for buyers in the State of California. According to the HAI, the State's housing affordability peaked in 2012 at 56 percent and has since declined to 33 percent.⁹

The Bay Area region is the most expensive housing market in California, and one of the most expensive real estate markets in the United States. The Bay Area's median home price estimated at \$989,000 in Quarter 2 of 2020, with a HAI of 24 percent. During the Bay Area's peak affordability in 2012, less than half of households could afford to purchase a median priced home in the region (45 percent). The minimum annual income required to purchase a home in the Bay Area has risen by 106.3 percent, which is only slightly higher than the State of California at 104.5 percent, but significantly higher than the U.S. at 71.3 percent.¹⁰

Different sources estimate San Mateo County's median for-sale home price at different values. The 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates placed the median estimated value of owner-occupied housing units in San Mateo County at \$994,100, as can be seen in Table 1. However, the California Association of Realtors estimated that the median home price in San Mateo County was at \$1,700,000 in Quarter 2 of 2020, second only to San Francisco County in the Bay Area. The minimum qualifying income for a home of that price is \$320,400, and San Mateo County's HAI is only 18 percent.¹¹ San Mateo County is the third least affordable county in California, behind Mono and San Francisco counties. Zillow estimates that the median home price as of Quarter 3 2020 in San Mateo County was approximately \$1,399,416.¹²

Regardless of the source, however, price increases in San Mateo County's for-sale housing market continue to rise, outpacing housing price growth in both the State of California and the U.S., visualized using data from Zillow in Figure 10. Home prices in San Mateo County increased by 46.1 percent between 2014 and 2020, compared to 41.9 percent in the State of California and 38.6 percent in the U.S. This trend is expected to continue, as Zillow forecasts a 7.1 percent increase in home prices by Quarter 3 2021.¹³

Figure 10: Home Values in Quarter 3, Zillow, 2014-2020

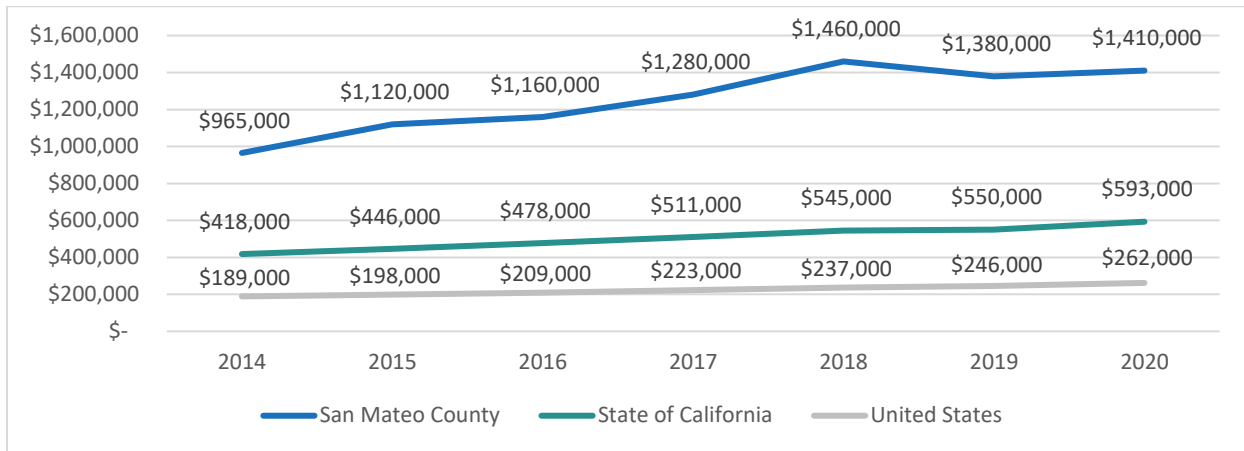
⁹ California Association of Realtors. (2020). *Housing Affordability Index - Traditional*. California Association of Realtors Data and Statistics. <https://www.car.org/en/marketdata/data/haitraditional>

¹⁰ California Association of Realtors. (2020). *Housing Affordability Index - Traditional*. California Association of Realtors Data and Statistics. <https://www.car.org/en/marketdata/data/haitraditional>

¹¹ California Association of Realtors. (2020). *Housing Affordability Index - Traditional*. California Association of Realtors Data and Statistics. <https://www.car.org/en/marketdata/data/haitraditional>

¹² Zillow. (2020, September). *San Mateo County Market Overview*. Zillow San Mateo County Home Values. <https://www.zillow.com/san-mateo-county-ca/home-values/>

¹³ Zillow. (2020, September). *San Mateo County Market Overview*. Zillow San Mateo County Home Values. <https://www.zillow.com/san-mateo-county-ca/home-values/>



Source: Zillow (2020, September). *San Mateo County Market Overview. Zillow San Mateo County Home Values.* Retrieved from <https://www.zillow.com/san-mateo-county-ca/home-values>

B. RENTERS

Approximately 40 percent of San Mateo County residents are renters, compared to 45.4 percent in California and 36.2 percent of households in the U.S.¹⁴ Like for-sale home prices, fair market rents have substantially increased in San Mateo County since 2014 as well, as can be seen in Table 2. Fair market rents, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), are defined as the cost of shelter plus utilities regardless of who pays. In San Mateo County, fair market rents have increased for all unit sizes since 2014, with 0- and 1-bedroom units experiencing the largest price increases.

Table 2: Fair Market Rents, San Mateo County, 2020

Unit Size	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	Percent Change 2014 to 2020
0 Bedroom	\$2,197	\$2,069	\$2,014	\$1,915	\$1,412	\$1,256	\$1,191	84.5%
1 Bedroom	\$2,720	\$2,561	\$2,499	\$2,411	\$1,814	\$1,635	\$1,551	75.4%
2 Bedroom	\$3,339	\$3,170	\$3,121	\$3,018	\$2,289	\$2,062	\$1,956	70.7%
3 Bedroom	\$4,365	\$4,153	\$4,070	\$3,927	\$2,987	\$2,801	\$2,657	64.3%
4 Bedroom	\$4,657	\$4,392	\$4,346	\$4,829	\$3,556	\$3,386	\$3,212	45.0%

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. data.census.gov

Source: Office of Policy Development and Research (2020). Fair Market Rents | HUD USER. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Retrieved 2020 from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html#2020> ¹⁵

The median monthly rent for San Mateo County according to 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates is approximately \$2,158, which is significantly higher than median rent for the State of California (\$1,429) and the United States (\$1,023). According to HUD, households that pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs each month are considered rent-burdened, while households paying more than 50 percent of their income on housing costs are severely rent-burdened. In San Mateo County, almost half (49 percent) of all households are rent-burdened, which is comparable to the U.S. (50.2 percent), and less than California (55.4 percent).¹⁶ The number of rent-burdened households in all three geographies has remained relatively stable since 2014.

C. HOMELESSNESS

Veteran homelessness is a major focus of policy, funding, and research, both at national and local levels. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is actively working to address homelessness in the veteran population at the national scale. In 2018, the total number of veterans experiencing homelessness in the United States dropped by 5.4 percent and decreased an additional 2.1 percent in 2019. Since 2010, it is estimated the number of homeless veterans in the U.S. has decreased by almost half. Over the course of 2019 and 2020, the VA assisted 124,900 veterans and veteran families by either providing housing or otherwise preventing them from becoming homeless by partnering with local governments, companies, and stakeholders to achieve results. In the 2021 budget request, the VA asked for \$1.9 billion to fund programs for homeless veterans and their families, an increase of \$82 million over 2020. The 2021 request includes a \$30 million increase for case management for the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program.¹⁷ Additional information on HUD-VASH program utilization for veterans in San Mateo County can be found in sub-sections 1.A and 1.B of the Health and Well-Being section of the Veteran Demographic Report.

In the United States, veterans accounted for about 8.1 percent of all people experiencing homelessness in the United States in 2019, a 49.5 percent decrease from 2009. At 10,980 homeless veterans, the State

¹⁵ Office of Policy Development and Research. (2020). Fair Market Rents | HUD USER [Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are used to determine payment standard amounts for the Housing Choice Voucher program, to determine initial renewal rents for some expiring project-based Section 8 contracts, to determine initial rents for housing assistance payment (HAP) contracts in the Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy program (Mod Rehab), rent ceilings for rental units in both the HOME Investment Partnerships program and the Emergency Solution Grants program, calculation of maximum award amounts for Continuum of Care recipients and the maximum amount of rent a recipient may pay for property leased with Continuum of Care funds, and calculation of flat rents in Public Housing units. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually estimates FMRs for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defined metropolitan areas, some HUD defined subdivisions of OMB metropolitan areas and each nonmetropolitan county. 42 USC 1437f requires FMRs be posted at least 30 days before they are effective and that they are effective at the start of the federal fiscal year (generally October 1).]. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html#2020>

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. data.census.gov

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2020, February). Department of Veterans Affairs - Budget in Brief 2021. <https://www.va.gov/budget/docs/summary/fy2021VAbudgetInBrief.pdf>

of California accounted for almost 30 percent of all veterans experiencing homelessness in the United States, and more than 50 percent of all unsheltered veterans in the U.S. at 7,719.¹⁸

2.0 SAN MATEO COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

The San Mateo County Continuum of Care is a collaboration of stakeholders promoting a community-wide commitment to end homelessness. The Continuum of Care (CoC) is led by the San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA). The Center on Homelessness serves as San Mateo County’s Continuum of Care coordinating entity, managing a network of community-based organizations that meet quarterly to ensure that the County’s system of care functions in a collaborative manner.

San Mateo County’s Center on Homelessness coordinates among a group of Core Service Agencies, which provide clients with crisis intervention and referrals based on an evaluation of their needs and qualifications for assistance. The Core Service Agencies can also provide referrals for homeless shelters and other homeless services. Core Service Agencies in San Mateo County include Daly City Community Services Center, Samaritan House South, Coastside Hope, Pacifica Resource Center, Samaritan House, Puente, Fair Oaks Community Center, and YMCA Community Resource Center. These Core Service Agencies serve both veteran and non-veteran individuals and households. Table 3 provides a summary of veteran and veteran households served by these Core Agencies from 2014 to 2020. Between 2014 and 2020, veterans and veteran households comprised between 0.7 percent and 2.4 percent of total clients served by the Core Agencies.

Table 3: Core Service Agencies - Veterans and Veteran Households Served, San Mateo County, 2014-2020

Calendar Year	Number of Veterans	Number of Individuals in Veteran Households	Veterans as Percentage of Clients Served	Veteran Households as Percentage of clients Served
2014	111	197	1.9%	1.3%
2015	228	365	2.3%	1.5%
2016	237	421	2.4%	1.8%
2017	222	404	2.0%	1.6%
2018	252	440	2.2%	1.6%
2019	244	380	2.0%	1.3%
2020	167	272	1.0%	0.7%

Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (2020). Core Veteran Service Agencies – Veterans and Veteran Households Served. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

The San Mateo County HSA, in collaboration with community partners, conducts a bi-annual One Day Homeless Count and Survey or Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. The purpose of this survey is to gather

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2020, January). The 2019 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2019-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

information to help the community better understand homelessness in San Mateo County over time. This dataset provides important insights to inform effective planning and services to assist people experiencing homelessness, and those at risk of homelessness. Since 2014, the percentage of veterans experiencing homelessness as determined through the PIT Count has declined from 13 percent to 4.8 percent, while the total number of people experiencing homelessness has increased since 2014, as can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: CoC Point in Time Counts, San Mateo County, 2014-2020

Calendar Year	Total # of people experiencing sheltered homelessness	Total # of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness	Total # of people experiencing homelessness	Total # of veterans experiencing homelessness	Percentage of veterans experiencing homelessness of total
2014	725	-	725	94	13.0%
2015	708	775	1483	183	12.3%
2016	586	-	586	46	7.9%
2017	616	637	1253	105	8.4%
2018	601	-	601	43	7.1%
2019	611	901	1512	69	4.6%
2020	671	-	671	32	4.8%

Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (2020). Core Veteran Service Agencies – Veterans and Veteran Households Served. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

The San Mateo County CoC served 482 veterans in 2020, up from 388 in 2014. While the overall number of veterans served by CoC is higher in 2020 than 2014, the peak year in this timeframe was 2016, when the CoC served 514 veterans.

The San Mateo County CoC connects veterans experiencing homelessness with several program types, including emergency shelters, housing with services (no disability required), permanent supportive housing (disability required), rapid re-housing, housing locator, street outreach, and transitional housing. Of these programs, the most frequently utilized by veterans in San Mateo County since 2017 has been permanent supportive housing, as 56.6 percent of veterans served by CoC programs in 2020 utilized this program type. Prior to 2017, transitional housing was one of the more prevalent program types among veterans experiencing homelessness in San Mateo County, however the number of veterans utilizing this program markedly declined between from 30.9 percent in 2017 to 0.6 percent in 2020. On the other hand, utilization of the emergency shelter program increased significantly between 2014 and 2020, with peak usage of this program occurring in 2018, at 37.4 percent. Program utilization, displayed as percent of the total number of veterans using CoC programs each year, can be seen in Table 5.

While the number of veterans being counted by Point-in-Time Counts has decreased since 2014, the number of veterans being served by CoC has increased, in part due to the ongoing availability of Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program funding, allowing the CoC to serve not only veterans experiencing homelessness, but veteran households at risk of homelessness as well. In 2020, veterans may have also had access to additional housing and emergency shelter options that were

deployed in rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic; some of these resources operate outside of the CoC's Coordinated Entry System and may not be captured in this data.

Table 5: Percent of All Veterans and Veteran Households Served Annually by the CoC by Program Type, San Mateo County, 2014 to 2020

Project Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Emergency Shelter	14.7%	11.1%	9.3%	18.8%	37.4%	33.5%	25.1%
PH - Housing with Services (no disability required)	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
PH - Permanent Supportive Housing (disability required)	31.4%	42.1%	41.6%	43.3%	44.8%	54.0%	56.6%
PH - Rapid Re-Housing	41.2%	37.0%	39.5%	37.9%	28.9%	17.1%	21.8%
Housing Locator	-	-	1.0%	1.2%	1.0%	2.3%	2.3%
Street Outreach	1.8%	2.3%	3.5%	5.0%	7.1%	6.9%	6.2%
Transitional Housing	41.5%	38.2%	42.6%	30.9%	11.1%	7.5%	0.6%
Total Unduplicated Number of Veterans	388	387	514	499	495	480	482

Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (2020). Veterans Served Annually by the CoC by Project Type. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

The San Mateo County CoC not only tracks utilization of different programs by year, but also what type of veteran households experiencing homelessness are being served. The defined household types used by CoC are veteran households with children, veteran households without children, single adult veterans, and indeterminable veteran households. Single adult veterans have continuously been the household type most frequently served by all San Mateo County Continuum of Care programs between the years of 2014 and 2020, as can be seen in Table 6. Veteran households with children have consistently comprised around 10 percent of all households receiving any CoC program, reaching a peak of 14.2 percent in 2016. Veteran households without children and indeterminable veteran households have remained at or below 10 percent between 2014 and 2020.

Table 6: Percent of Total Veterans Served Annually by All CoC Programs by Household Type, San Mateo County, 2014 to 2020

Household Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Veteran Households with Children	10.8%	11.4%	14.2%	11.8%	10.3%	10.8%	10.6%
Veteran Households without Children	9.3%	7.8%	8.8%	8.0%	8.1%	9.4%	9.1%
Single Adult Veterans	72.7%	70.0%	69.5%	71.5%	72.7%	72.9%	74.9%
Indeterminable Veteran Households	7.2%	10.9%	7.6%	8.6%	8.9%	6.9%	5.4%

Total Unduplicated Number of Veterans Served in each Household Type	388	387	514	499	495	480	482
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Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (2020). Veterans Served Annually by the CoC by Household Type. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

In comparing San Mateo County CoC program participation by household type and program type, there is general consistency in which types of households utilized which programs, as can be seen in Table 7. In 2020, the highest participation in a San Mateo County CoC program across veteran household type was permanent supportive housing (disability required), as over 50 percent of each household type utilized this program. Additionally, the second- and third-most utilized programs for all households are emergency shelter and rapid re-housing. The notable exception is indeterminable veteran households, who had a higher participation rate in the street outreach (15.4 percent) and housing locator (11.5 percent) programs than the other veteran household types.

Table 7: Percent of Total Veterans Served by CoC Program Type and Household Type, San Mateo County, 2020

Program Type	Veteran Households with Children	Veteran Households without Children	Single Adult Veterans	Indeterminable Veteran Households
Emergency Shelter	29.4%	11.4%	26.0%	26.9%
PH - Housing with Services (no disability required)	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%
PH - Permanent Supportive Housing (disability required)	52.9%	72.7%	54.6%	65.4%
PH - Rapid Re-Housing	23.5%	15.9%	23.5%	3.8%
Housing Locator	3.9%	2.3%	1.4%	11.5%
Street Outreach	0.0%	6.8%	6.4%	15.4%
Transitional Housing	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (2020). Veterans Served Annually by CoC Program Type and Household Type. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

Veterans who receive CoC services are asked to provide an exit destination. The top five exit destinations for veterans in 2020 are provided in Table 8. Since 2014, rental by client with HUD-VASH subsidy has been the most common exit destination for veterans served by San Mateo County CoC. While transitional housing was in the top five most common exit destinations for veterans prior to 2017, this exit destination has become less frequent in 2018 to 2020, likely due to increasing market rental rates.

Table 8: Exit Destinations of Veterans Served Annually by the CoC, San Mateo County, 2020

Rank	Exit Destination	Total Number of Exits
1	Rental by client, with VASH housing subsidy	71
2	Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)	34

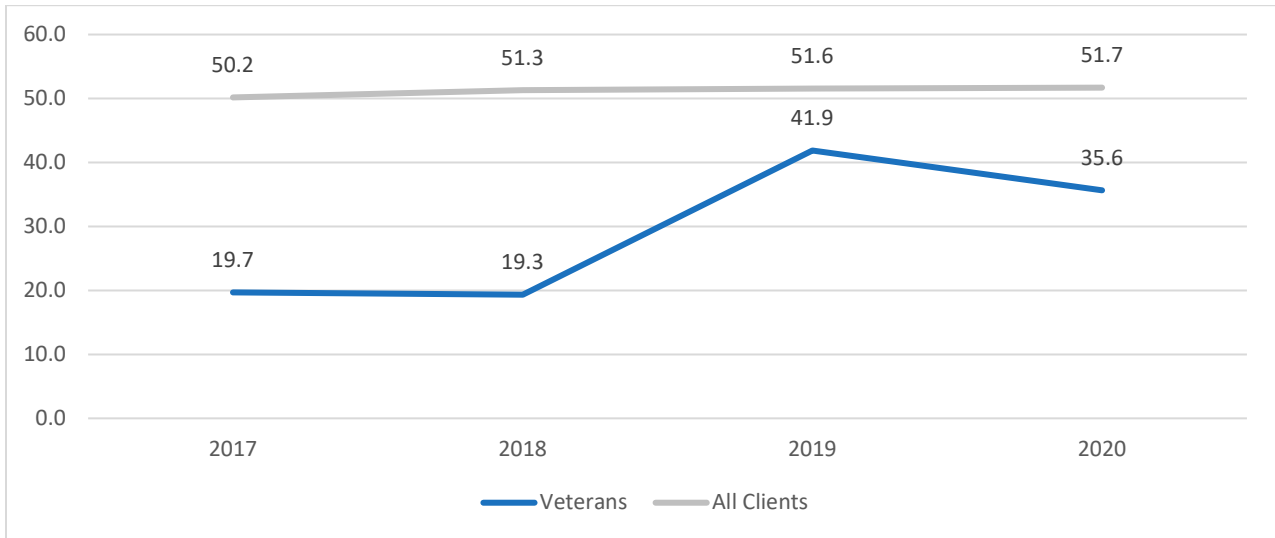
3	Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher, or RHY-funded Host Home shelter	16
4	Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	12
5	Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	9

Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (2020). Veterans Served Annually by CoC Program Type and Household Type. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

i. COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM

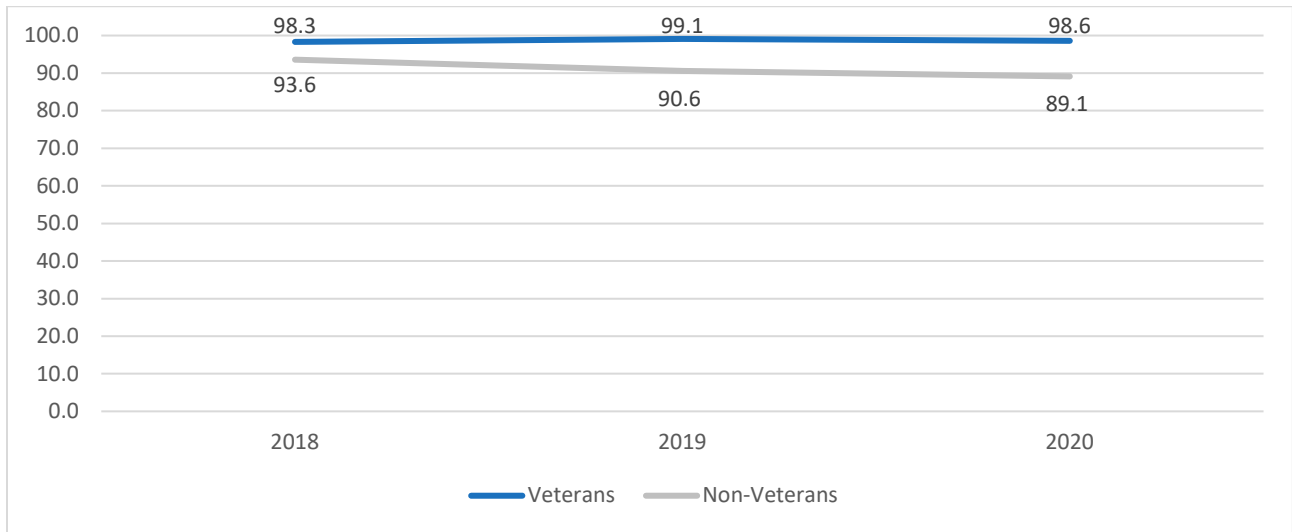
San Mateo County’s CoC Coordinated Entry System (CES) is designed to streamline access into housing for people who do not have a place to live. Higher CES scores indicate a higher vulnerability level, and households are prioritized for rapid re-housing based on their vulnerability level and barriers to housing. People who are unsheltered, disabled, have low levels of income, have evictions, or have criminal convictions are considered the most vulnerable. San Mateo County implemented a CES in 2017 for families, and in 2018 for adults and youth. San Mateo County’s CES scores for veteran families and individuals compared to all client CES scores for those who were assessed are included in Figure 11 and Figure 12. While veteran families have had lower CES scores consistently since 2017, individual veterans have higher CES scores than all clients combined since 2018.

Figure 11: Veteran Family CES Scores compared to Non-Veteran Family CES Scores, San Mateo County, 2014-2020



Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (2020). Veterans CES Scores compared to All Clients. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

Figure 12: Veteran Individual CES Scores compared to All Individual CES Scores, San Mateo County, 2014-2020



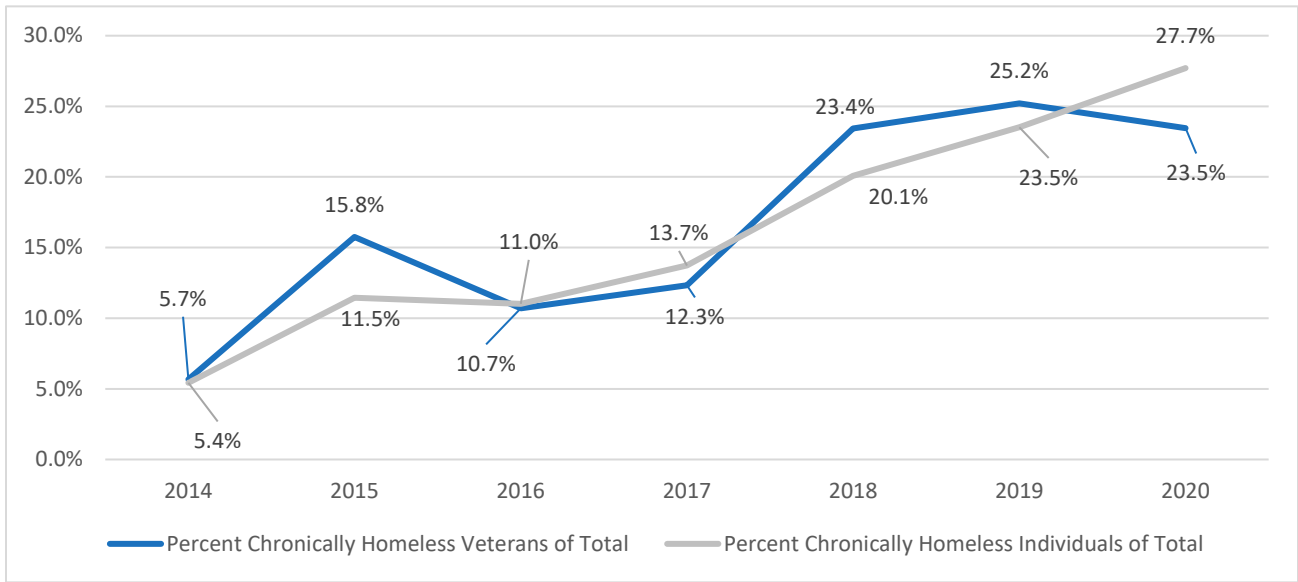
Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (2020). Veterans CES Scores compared to All Clients. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

ii. CHRONICITY OF HOMELESSNESS

Chronic homelessness is used to describe people who have either experienced homelessness for over one year, or repeatedly, while struggling with a condition like mental illness, substance use disorder, or a physical disability. According to the HUD’s most recent point-in-time estimates, approximately 96,141 people in the U.S. experienced chronic homelessness in January 2019.¹⁹ The chronicity of homelessness in both the veteran and total population experiencing homelessness has increased markedly in San Mateo County from 2014 to 2020, as can be seen in Figure 13. Of the 486 veterans experiencing homelessness in San Mateo County in 2020, 23.5 percent are considered chronically homeless. The CoC program type most utilized by chronically homeless veterans in San Mateo County is street outreach (79.3 percent), followed by the housing locator (72.7 percent) and emergency shelters (44.6 percent).

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2020, January). The 2019 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2019-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

Figure 13: Veteran and Overall Homelessness by Chronicity, San Mateo County, 2014-2020



Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (2020). *Chronicity of Homelessness*. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

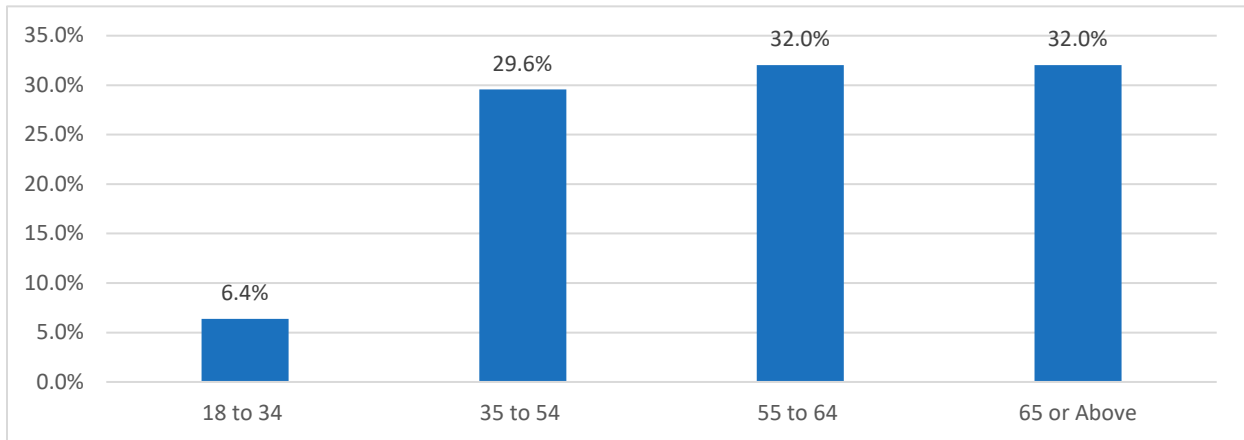
iii. DEMOGRAPHICS OF VETERANS SERVED BY SAN MATEO COUNTY COC

The San Mateo County CoC collects demographic data for the veteran population they serve. Similarities and differences between the demographics of veterans served by CoC programs and the overall veteran population based on 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates, as well as changes in program participant demographics since 2014, can be found on the following pages.

(a) AGE

There are notable differences in the age of the veteran population served by San Mateo County CoC programs compared to the estimated veteran population in San Mateo County as a whole. Veterans over the age of 65 comprise 32 percent of CoC program participants, compared to 58.4 percent in the overall veteran population in San Mateo County. The other notable contrast between CoC program participants and overall veteran population 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates is in the 55 to 64 age group, where CoC participants make up 32 percent of the population, compared to only 14.5 percent in the overall veteran population. The age distribution of veterans participating in CoC programs has remained largely the same since 2014.

Figure 14: Percent of Total Veterans Served by CoC Program by Age, San Mateo County, 2020

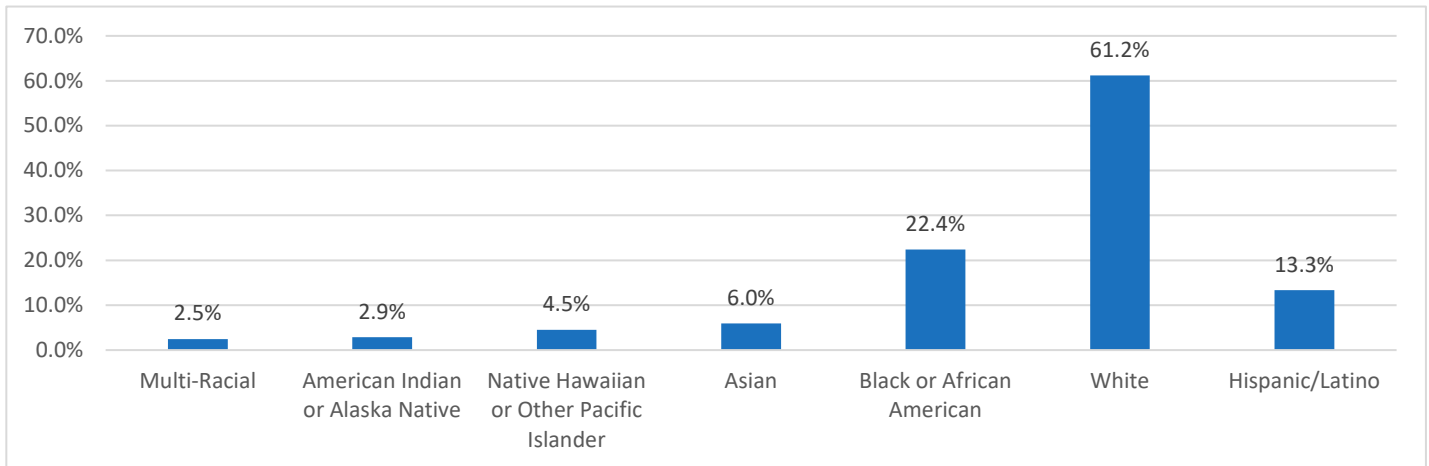


Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care. (01/01/2020 to 10/15/2020). Veterans Served by CoC Programs by Demographics. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

(b) RACE AND ETHNICITY

The racial and ethnic composition of veterans participating in San Mateo County CoC programs is like the estimated race and ethnicity of the overall veteran population in San Mateo County. The notable exception is that 22.4 percent of veterans participating in CoC programs in 2020 are Black or African American, while only 7.1 percent of the 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates overall veteran population is Black or African American. The percentage of Black or African American veterans participating in San Mateo County CoC programs has slightly decreased since 2014, when 28.4 percent of participants were Black or African American, while the proportion of White participants increased from 57.2 percent in 2014 to 61.2 percent in 2018.

Figure 15: Percent of Total Veterans Served by CoC Program by Race and Ethnicity, San Mateo County, 2020

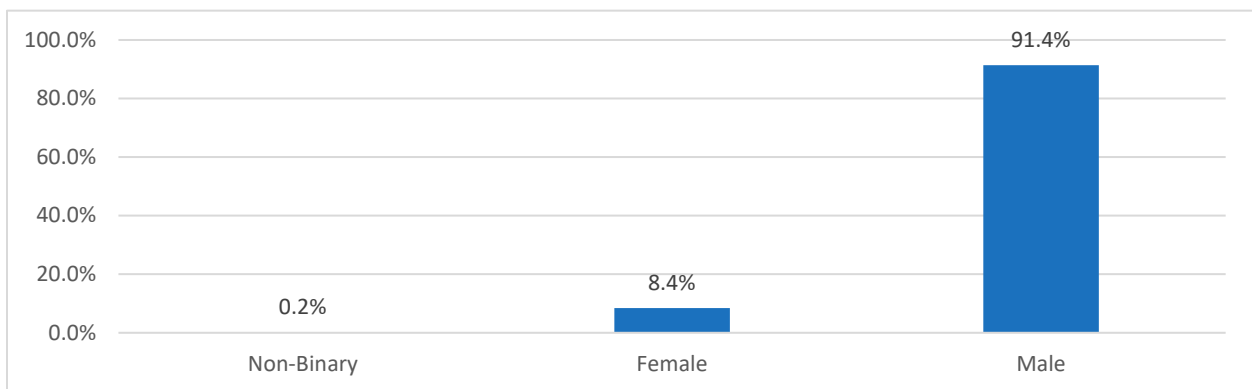


Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (01/01/2020 to 10/15/2020). Veterans Served by CoC Programs by Demographics. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

(c) GENDER

In 2020, there was a slightly larger proportion of female veterans participating in San Mateo County CoC programs (8.4 percent) than is approximated by the 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates in the overall veteran population in San Mateo County (6.4 percent). The percentage of females participating in CoC programs has decreased slightly from 2014, when 10.1 percent of veteran program participants identified as female.

Figure 16: Percent of Total Veterans Served by CoC Program by Gender, San Mateo County, 2020



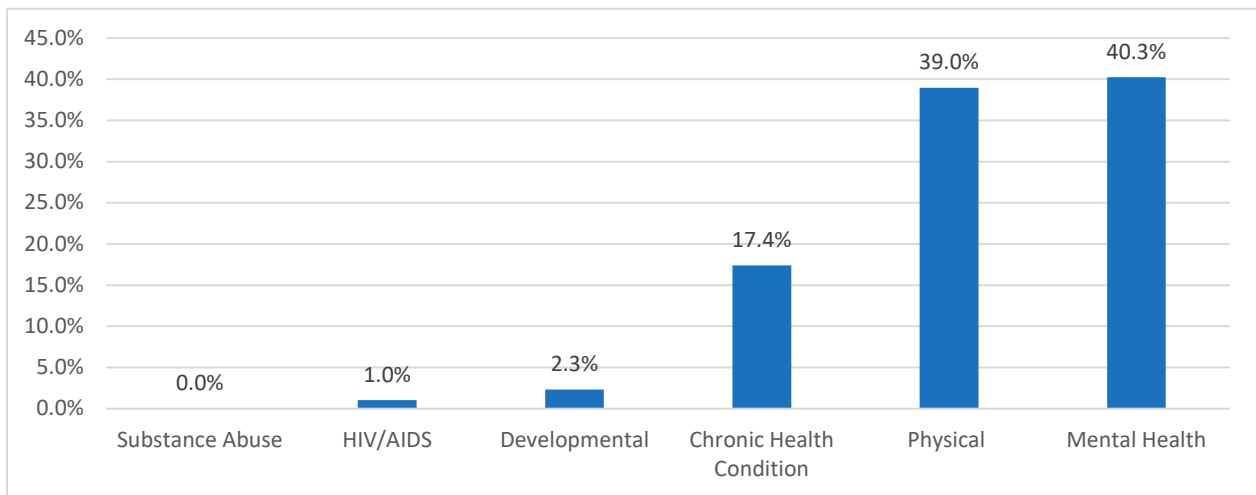
Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care. (01/01/2020 to 10/15/2020). Veterans Served by CoC Programs by Demographics. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

(d) DISABILITY TYPE

Veterans with disabilities make up a larger proportion of the total veterans being served by San Mateo County’s CoC programs than in the overall veteran population. Approximately 79.1 percent of veterans

participating in CoC programs have a disability, compared to an estimated 13.8 percent in the total veteran population in San Mateo County, according to 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates. Since 2014, the percent of veterans with a disability who are participating in San Mateo County’s CoC programs has increased substantially, from 51.5 percent in 2014 to 79.1 percent of total veterans participating in CoC programs in 2020. Veterans with physical disabilities rose from 28.7 percent in 2014 to 39.0 percent in 2020, while veterans with chronic health conditions make up a smaller proportion of those with disabilities in 2020 (17.4 percent) compared to 2014 (28.7 percent). This increase is likely due to local and federal policies related to the prioritization of those experiencing chronic homelessness for CoC services and programs.

Figure 17: Percent of Total Veterans Served by CoC Program by Disability Type, San Mateo County, 2020



Source: San Mateo County Continuum of Care (01/01/2020 to 10/15/2020). Veterans Served by CoC Programs by Demographics. San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Veteran households in the U.S. tend to have higher incomes than non-veteran households. Overall, veteran households tend to have higher incomes and are less likely to live in poverty, regardless of race, ethnicity, or educational attainment. In 2017, the median annual household income²⁰ for veteran households in the United States was approximately \$88,700, compared to \$76,100 for non-veterans. Additionally, veteran households headed by a minority head of household and those with lower education levels have a substantially higher median income than their non-veteran counterparts. For example, in 2017 non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic veteran households had a median household income that was \$20,000 higher than non-veterans. Comparatively, non-Hispanic White veteran households had an annual

²⁰ Median annual household incomes are adjusted for household size, scaled to reflect three-person households in 2018 dollars.

income that was only \$5,100 higher than non-Hispanic White non-veteran households. The median annual household income is also \$20,000 higher for veteran households with a high school diploma than for non-veteran households with the same education level. As the level of education increases, this gap lessens to approximately \$2,500 for households with a bachelor's degree or higher.²¹

1.0 EDUCATION

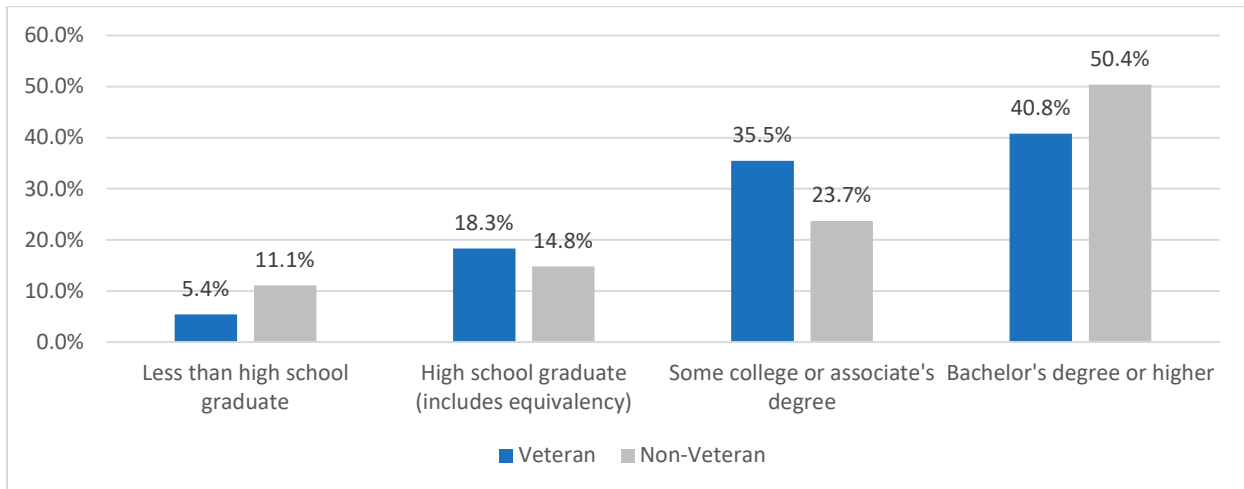
Nationally, an estimated 65.5 percent of veterans in the civilian population age 25 and over have some form of higher education, either falling into the category of some college or an associate degree (37.2 percent) or a bachelor's degree or higher (28.3 percent). Only approximately 6.2 percent of the veteran population in the U.S. has less than a high school graduate level of education. 60 percent of non-veterans have an associate degree or higher at the national level, while 12.9 percent have less than a high school diploma or GED.

According to 2018 ACS 5-year Estimates for the civilian population age 25 and over, San Mateo County's veteran and non-veteran populations have a higher level of education than the national population. Most veterans in San Mateo County have at least some college or an associate degree (76.3 percent). This number is slightly higher than for the non-veteran population at 74.1 percent and is significantly higher than the national estimate for veterans. Non-veterans are more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher than veterans, at 50.4 percent versus 40.8 percent, respectively. Only an estimated 5.4 percent of veterans in San Mateo County have less than a high school graduate level of education, compared to 11.1 percent of the non-veteran population.

While veterans are more likely to have some form of higher education than non-veterans, between 2014 and 2018 the estimated number of non-veterans with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 15.3 percent, while the percent of veterans with a bachelor's degree remained almost the same at 41.4 percent in 2014 and 40.8 percent in 2018.

Figure 18: Educational Attainment by Veteran Status, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates

²¹ Bennett, J. (2019, December 9). Veteran households in U.S. are economically better off than those of non-veterans. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/12/09/veteran-households-in-u-s-are-economically-better-off-than-those-of-non-veterans/>



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). S2101: Veteran Status. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

2.0 EMPLOYMENT

The U.S. Military is a large national employer. As of March 2020, the U.S. Military employs 1,123,086 active-duty enlisted personnel across all military branches and the Coast Guard.²²

In the U.S., veterans comprise 5.7 percent of the civilian labor force. The median age of veterans in the civilian labor force is higher than the median age of non-veterans in the labor force. For women veterans in the labor force the median age is 46, compared to 42 for women non-veterans. Additionally, the median age of male veterans in the labor force is 52, while the median age of non-veterans in the labor force is 41.²³

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the civilian labor force is comprised of people who are employed and people who are unemployed, defined as not currently working, but are available and actively searching for work.²⁴ In 2019, the unemployment rate for all veterans in the U.S. was 3.1 percent. Of the approximately 284,000 unemployed veterans in 2019, about 56 percent were between the ages 25 to 54, 39 percent were age 55 and over, and 5 percent were ages 18 to 24. Veterans with a service-connected disability were estimated to have a slightly higher unemployment rate of 4.8 percent.²⁵

²² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020, September 1). *Military Careers : Occupational Outlook Handbook*: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/military/military-careers.htm>

²³ Glowacki, D. N., *Veterans' Employment and Training Service*, & United States Department of Labor. (2019). *2019 Gender and Veteran Demographics [Slides]*. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SurveysAndStudies/VETPOP.pdf>

²⁴ Glowacki, D. N., *Veterans' Employment and Training Service*, & United States Department of Labor. (2019). *2019 Gender and Veteran Demographics [Slides]*. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SurveysAndStudies/VETPOP.pdf>

²⁵ U.S. Department of Labor. (2020, March). *Employment Situation of Veterans - 2019*. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/vet.pdf>

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the estimated veteran unemployment rate for the U.S. as a whole, as of May 2020, was 5.5 percent, which is comparable to the non-veteran unemployment rate of 6.6 percent.²⁶

In San Mateo County, the latest available dataset estimating unemployment for the veteran versus non-veteran is the ACS 2018 5-Year Estimates. According to this source, the unemployment rate for veterans in San Mateo County is around 6 percent, while the unemployment rate for the non-veteran population is approximately 4 percent.²⁷

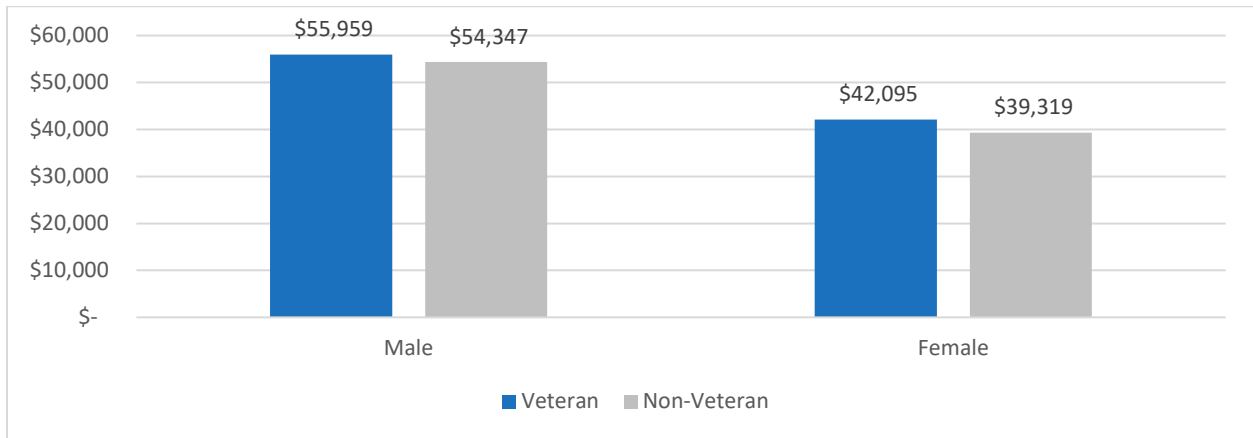
3.0 INCOME

Following national trends, the 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates indicate that the overall median annual individual income is higher for veterans compared to non-veterans in San Mateo County, at \$55,151 and \$46,323, respectively. However, this trend is not shared equally by both male and female veterans, as demonstrated in Figure 19. The median annual income for veteran and non-veteran women is substantially lower than for male veterans and non-veterans. While this trend is more pronounced in the non-veteran population, in 2018 female veterans had a median annual income 24.8 percent lower than veterans who are male. The median annual income for both male and female veterans in San Mateo County has increased since 2014, by 18.3 percent for male veterans and 12.2 percent for female veterans.

Figure 19: Median Annual Income by Veteran Status and Gender, San Mateo County, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates

²⁶ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020, October). *Unemployment rates for people 18 years and older by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted*. U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.bls.gov/charts/employment-situation/unemployment-rates-for-persons-18-years-and-older-by-veteran-status.htm>

²⁷ It is worth noting that these figures may not accurately reflect the nuance of the current labor market, but rather provide an estimation and point of comparison between the veteran and non-veteran population in San Mateo County.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). S2101: Veteran Status. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

San Mateo County residents, including veterans and non-veterans, have a slightly lower poverty rate than both the State of California and the United States as a whole. In all three geographies the veteran poverty rate is lower than the non-veteran poverty rate. Approximately 5.1 percent of veterans in San Mateo County had income in the past 12 months below poverty level, compared to 6.8 percent of non-veterans. The State of California has an approximate poverty rate of 7.3 percent for veterans and 13 percent for non-veterans. Similarly, the U.S. has an estimated veteran poverty rate of 6.9 percent and 12.9 percent for non-veterans.²⁸

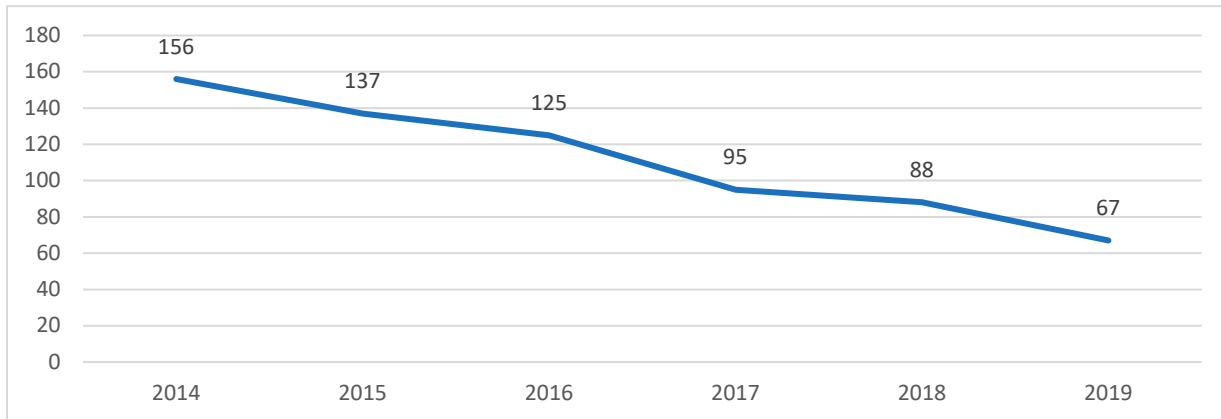
BASIC NEEDS AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS

1.0 PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA) offers several public assistance programs to those in need of food, shelter, and health care in San Mateo County. These programs include CalFresh, Medi-Cal, CalWORKS, and General Assistance (GA), and these benefits can be utilized by both veterans and non-veterans. Since 2014, the number of veterans served by these programs has been decreasing, as can be seen in Figure 20. As of October 2020, this trend continued, as only 56 veteran households have utilized one or more these San Mateo County HSA services. This data is based upon household self-report of veteran status or self-report of receipt of income from a VA source, which is not a required data element for program enrollment, and thus likely reflects an undercount of veteran households receiving public assistance through HSA.

²⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). S2101: Veteran Status. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

Figure 20: Number of Veterans Served by San Mateo County HSA Programs Based on Self-Report, 2014-2019



Source: San Mateo County Human Services Agency (2020). Number of Veterans Served by HSA Programs, 2014-2019.

Data note: the numbers and percentages displayed in Figures X and X are not unduplicated. Thus, if an individual or household utilized more than one HSA service, that person is counted twice in these numbers.

A. CALFRESH

CalFresh is a program that helps low-income individuals and families purchase healthy foods by providing monthly assistance on a debit-like card, referred to as an EBT card. After an individual or family is approved for the program, funds are automatically applied to their account each month, and these funds can be used at grocery stores, discount chains, farmer’s markets, and neighborhood stores. In order to qualify for CalFresh, individuals or families must be low income (income requirements are dependent on household size and monthly expenses), reside in San Mateo County, and have a household member who is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. CalFresh benefits are typically received 30 days after the application date, but there are also expedited services available. Individuals and families can receive expedited CalFresh services if they earn less than \$150.00 in the month they apply and have less than \$100 in cash, or if their household’s combined monthly income and cash are less than their household’s combined monthly rent and utilities, or if they are a migrant or seasonal farm worker and have less than \$100 in cash.²⁹ In San Mateo County, between 25 and 30 percent of veterans served by HSA programs utilized CalFresh between 2014 and 2019, as can be seen in Figure 21.

B. CALWORKS

CalWORKS is a public assistance program administered by the San Mateo County HSA that provides temporary cash assistance to low-income families with children and services to help parents find and retain a job. CalWORKS also helps children who are not receiving financial support and care from their parents. In order to be eligible for this program, individuals must be a family with a child or children under

²⁹ County of San Mateo Human Services. (2020). What is CalFresh? Public Assistance Programs. <https://hsa.smcgov.org/what-calfresh>

the age of 18, a pregnant mother in her last trimester, or a pregnant teen. Since 2014, the CalWORKS program is the San Mateo County Human Services Agency least-utilized program by veterans, as can be seen in Figure 21.

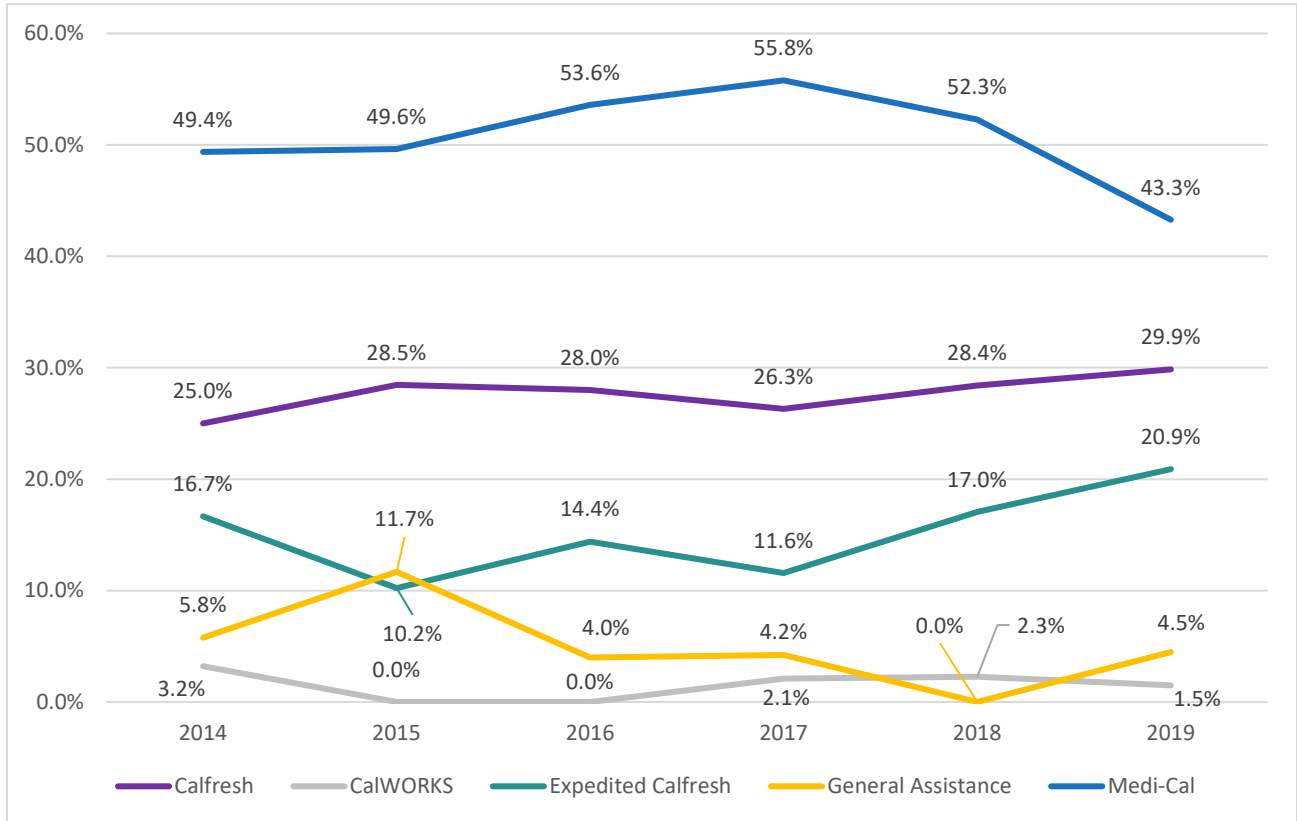
C. GENERAL ASSISTANCE (GA)

San Mateo County HSA's General Assistance (GA) program provides short-term cash assistance to low-income individuals residing in San Mateo County and are generally used to help pay for living expenses such as rent and utilities. In order to be eligible for GA funds, individuals must be at least 18 years old, have lived in San Mateo County for at least 15 consecutive days, and meet income and resource limits. Veteran use of the GA San Mateo County HSA program can be seen in Figure 21 and has been one of the lesser utilized programs since 2014 based upon the data set examined.

D. MEDI-CAL

Medi-Cal is California's version of the federal Medicaid health coverage program, which offers free or low-cost public health care for California residents with low income and resources. In contrast, veterans can be served by the VA for service-connected medical issues free of charge regardless of their income eligibility. In order to qualify for Medi-Cal, individuals or families must either be low-income, including adults, children and their families, persons with disabilities, children in foster care, former foster youth up to age 26, and pregnant individuals, or eligible immigrants. As can be seen in Figure 21, the highest proportion of veterans being served by San Mateo County HSA benefits were those utilizing the Medi-Cal program.

Figure 21: Percent of Total Veterans Utilizing San Mateo County HSA Programs by Program Type, 2014-2020



Source: San Mateo County Human Services Agency. (2020). Veteran utilization of HSA Programs by Program Type 2014-2019.

VETERAN BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

Federal benefits for veterans are very individualized and are lost if they are not applied for. Factors that determine what benefits veterans are eligible for include when they served, if they served in combat, whether or not they served during a congressionally approved war-time period, the cause and severity of disabilities if they may have, and other factors. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2021 budget request includes \$3.2 billion for the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA), a 2.6 percent increase over the 2020 enacted budget.³⁰

³⁰ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2020, February). Department of Veterans Affairs - Budget in Brief 2021. <https://www.va.gov/budget/docs/summary/fy2021VAbudgetInBrief.pdf>

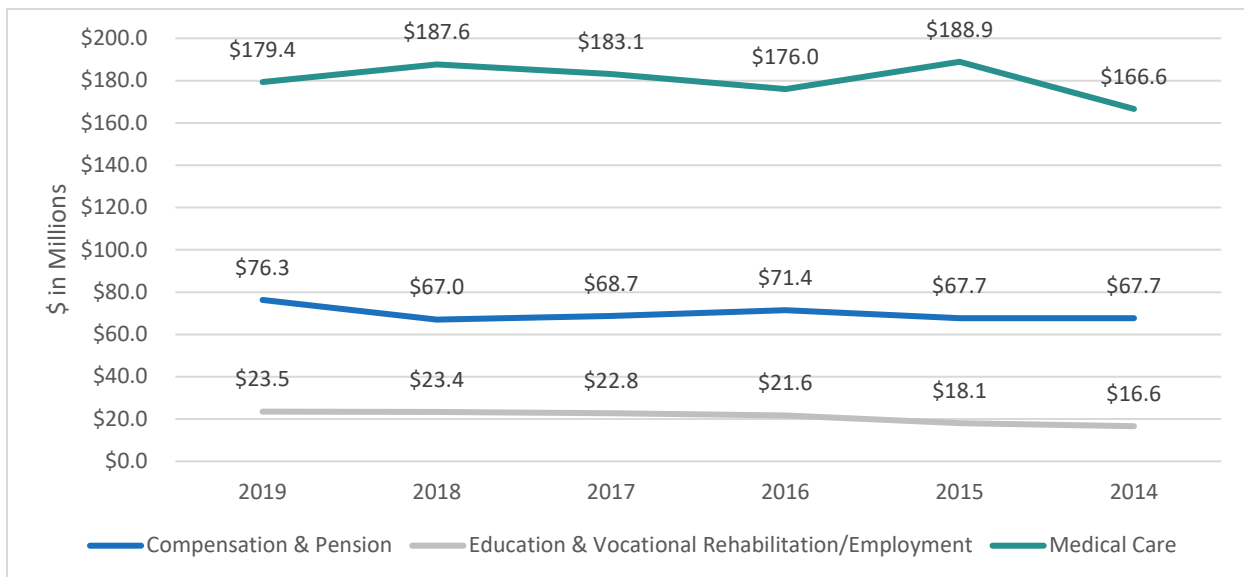
1.0 VETERAN BENEFIT CLAIMS

In the U.S. overall 49 percent, or 9.8 out of 20.0 million, veterans utilized at least one VA benefit or service in 2017, up from 39 percent in 2008. Of the 9.8 million veterans using VA programs, 45 percent used more than one benefit. Furthermore, the percentage of female veterans utilizing VBA services increased from 36 percent to 50 percent between 2008 and 2017. Similarly, male veterans using VA benefits rose from 39 percent in 2008 to 49 percent in 2017. Most VA users (76 percent) in 2017 utilized VA health care and/or disability compensation, of which 25 percent only used health care benefits, and 70 percent received disability compensation through VA health care.³¹

2.0 VETERAN BENEFIT EXPENDITURES

In 2019, total VA expenditures in San Mateo County were approximately \$287.2 million, an increase of about \$21.1 million over the VA expenditure amount in 2014 of \$266.1 million. While the VA population estimates mirror the overall decline in the population of veterans estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau, overall VA expenditures have continued to rise over time. Medical Care expenditures remain the greatest expense for the VA, although the amount spent on Medical Care in San Mateo decreased slightly between 2018 and 2019. Compensation and Pension expenditures have slightly risen and fallen between 2014 and 2019, while Education and Vocational Rehabilitation/Employment expenditures have steadily continued to rise, as can be seen in Figure 22.

Figure 22: VA Summary of Expenditures, San Mateo County, 2014-2019



³¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. VA Utilization Profile Quick Facts 2017. Retrieved 2020 from https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Quickfacts/VA_Utilization_Profile_2017.pdf.

Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. (2020). Expenditures. 2014-2019 VA Expenditures by Type. Retrieved 2020 from <https://www.va.gov/vetdata/expenditures.asp>.

3.0 CALVET

California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) is the statewide organization working to serve veterans and veteran families in California by connecting them with state and federal benefits and services. Approximately 1.6 million veterans currently reside in California, a total of 8 percent of the total U.S. veteran population, and the state is expected to receive an additional 30,000 discharged service members annually in the next several years. According to CalVet, the biggest demand for veteran benefits and services usually is immediately after discharge, and as the veteran population ages and needs additional access to medical and long-term care facilities.³² CalVet has numerous benefits and services aimed at helping California veterans around education, employment, healthcare, home loans, housing, advocacy, and VA claims.

“With the substantial number of veterans under the age of 30 leaving the military after deployments to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with a considerably large population of Vietnam veterans who are now approaching a period in their lives where they will need greater access to medical and long-term care, California is preparing for a sustained spike in earned services and benefits.”

– CalVet Veteran Services and Benefits*

A. CALIFORNIA TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CALTAP)

The California Transition Assistance Program (CalTAP), housed within CalVet, is designed to help veterans access their earned federal and state benefits, and offer support and assistance to veterans over time by offering pathways through a Core Curriculum, Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Service Providers. The Core Curriculum pathway is intended to help veterans and veteran families access services, benefits, and resources by offering in-person and online training. Examples of training topics include how to file disability claims, navigating the VA healthcare system, finding mental health services, financial literacy, home buying, and a variety of others. CalTAP’s Education Pathway helps veterans transition from military careers to civilian life by allowing veterans to acquire new skills and credentials through education. The Employment Pathway is designed to assist veterans in re-entering the workforce by offering training and a translation of skills assessment. Additionally, the Employment Pathway offers insight into how veterans can gain employment through the State of California or the U.S. Government. The Entrepreneurship Pathway provides veterans with resources to navigate State of California, U.S. Government, and non-governmental assistance for veteran business owners. CalTap’s Service Providers

³² CalVet. (2019). *Veteran Services and Benefits*. State of California Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/veteran-services-benefits>

*Source: CalVet. (2019). *Veteran Services and Benefits*. State of California Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/veteran-services-benefits>

pathway provides skills and training for veteran service providers to better understand veteran culture and experience.³³

4.0 COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS

County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) play an important role in helping veterans navigate benefits and services that are constantly changing through actions of Congress, federal courts, and the overall VA system. CVSOs also help individual veterans determine their eligibility to participate in various programs, while mitigating any potential financial risk they could run into while trying to navigate the system on their own. In 2017-2018, CVSOs nationwide helped leverage \$36 million in county and state funding into more than \$505 million in benefits.³⁴

The California Association of County Veterans Services Officers, Inc., in partnership with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) produces an annual report analyzing CVSO programs and services in the State of California. The report tracks two key metrics broken out by the State of California, and by individual counties. The two key metrics tracked by this report are “Compensation & Pension Utilization” and “New Awards Obtained.” The utilization rate is defined as the percentage of veterans receiving compensation and pension (C&P) benefits within the county, reported by the federal VA. New awards obtained refers to the monetary value of new or increased C&P benefits paid to eligible veterans and their dependents by the USDVA.³⁵

At 28.0 percent in 2018, the State of California has been steadily increasing the rate of utilization of the primary monetary C&P veteran benefits over the last decade, and the utilization rate has increased 42.1 percent since 2014. California’s overall utilization rate has consistently outpaced the national utilization rate since 2014.³⁶

“In total, the CVSOs accounted for over \$457 million in new or increased federal veteran benefits being brought into California’s economy during fiscal year 2018-19. Given that the state only provided \$5.6 million in support to CVSO operations, this represents a return on investment of \$81.75 to California’s economy for every \$1 of general fund spent.”

– CVSO 2020 Annual Report*

³³ CalVet. (2019). *California Transition Assistance Program (CalTAP)*. State of California Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/California-Transition-Assistance-Program.aspx>

³⁴ California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. (2020). *CVSO 2020 Annual Report*. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.12.145.239/84d.64c.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CVSO-2020-Annual-Report-revised.pdf>

*Source: CalVet. (2019). *Veteran Services and Benefits*. State of California Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/veteran-services-benefits>

³⁵ California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. (2020). *CVSO 2020 Annual Report*. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.12.145.239/84d.64c.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CVSO-2020-Annual-Report-revised.pdf>

³⁶ California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. (2020). *CVSO 2020 Annual Report*. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.12.145.239/84d.64c.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CVSO-2020-Annual-Report-revised.pdf>

A. SAN MATEO COUNTY CVSO

San Mateo County had 4,590 C&P cases in 2018. The County's utilization rate was lower than the State of California as a whole at 20.7 percent, and the average C&P award per claimant in San Mateo County was \$14,598, compared to the statewide average award of \$15,681. New awards attributable to the San Mateo County CVSO in 2018-2019 totaled \$6,765,645, and the average new award was \$10,791. These numbers were comparable to counties with similar-sized veteran populations.

Between January 1, 2014 and November 25, 2020, the San Mateo County CVSO served a total of 6,102 individual veterans. Of the veterans served during that period, 609 were indigent referrals, 5,493 were non-indigent referrals, and 178 were veterans experiencing homelessness. Indigent referrals are for veterans whom a CW-5 or similar referral form is received for the purpose of verifying benefit status, while non-indigent referrals are for all other veterans who are served by this office. Veterans who are experiencing homelessness are identified as part of the homeless population and may be indigent or non-indigent.

The San Mateo County CVSO provides non-monetary assistance such as benefit eligibility queries, requests for records, releases of medical information, and statements of support of claims. Another type of assistance provided by the CVSO is monetary assistance, including C&P applications, dependency and indemnity compensation, financial verification reports, dependent college educational assistance, application for burial benefits, and other monetary claims. In San Mateo County between 2014 and 2020, the most CVSO claims filed for all veterans served were in the 'other monetary' category, for which there 8,298 claims made. The next most popular claim types during this time period was C&P applications (2,794), statement in support of claims (1,251), and dependent college educational assistance (807). The lump-sum amounts awarded by the San Mateo County CVSO between 2014 and 2020 was \$20,370,967.39, while the monthly amounts awarded was \$2,384,610.22.

5.0 EDUCATION BENEFITS

Educational benefits are one of the best-known benefits to veteran and veteran families. Access to higher education has been utilized as a transformative power helping service members transition from military to civilian life since 1944. Education benefits have primarily been transmitted to veterans through the G.I. Bill, a federal program administered through the VA.³⁷ The most recent version of the G.I. Bill was enacted through the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, and is commonly referred to as the Forever G.I. Bill. The Forever G.I. Bill was an expansion of the previous version which was the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, better known as the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill. In California, the Forever G.I. Bill offers up to three years of monetary benefits at the California State University and University of California systems, as well as community colleges. Monthly housing allowances, depending

³⁷ National Veteran Education Success Tracker. (2017). National Veteran Education Success Tracker. Student Veterans of America. <https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/veteran-success-tracker.pdf>

on where the school is located, and stipends for supplies and books while attending college, are also part of this program.³⁸

Another education benefit available to veterans is the CALVET College Waiver for Veteran Dependents benefit. This program waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California Campus. To qualify, veterans must apply through the CVSO and must be a dependent of an eligible disabled veteran with a disability rating of 0 percent or higher. Applications require proof of dependency through birth, adoption, marriage, etc., proof of service-connected disability, and proof of income – except for dependents of 100 percent service-connected veterans with a disability. To apply, interested parties must contact either their local CVSO or the Admissions Office of any California college system campus.

In the last three years, the CVSO in San Mateo County has assisted 429 students who were awarded \$2,422,770 through the CALVET College Waiver for Veteran Dependents program. The program serves as not only a needed service for students but also a marketing tool to help connect students and families to the CVSO through college campus Admission Offices.

6.0 VA CEMETERIES

The VA's National Cemetery Administration has nine cemeteries in California, and burial in a national cemetery is open to all members of the armed forces who did not receive a dishonorable discharge, service members who died on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty for training, and spouses or minor children of a veteran. The cemeteries accepting new internments in California are Bakersfield National Cemetery, Miramar National Cemetery, Riverside National Cemetery, Sacramento National Cemetery, and San Joaquin National Cemetery.³⁹

The State of California also operates three veterans' cemeteries; California Central Coast Cemetery in Monterey; Northern California Veterans Cemetery in Redding; and Yountville Veterans Home Cemetery in Yountville. There is a fourth cemetery being developed at the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, located in Irvine.⁴⁰

³⁸ California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. (2020). CVSO 2020 Annual Report. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.12.145.239/84d.64c.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CVSO-2020-Annual-Report-revised.pdf>

³⁹ California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. (2020). CVSO 2020 Annual Report. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.12.145.239/84d.64c.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CVSO-2020-Annual-Report-revised.pdf>

⁴⁰ California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. (2020). CVSO 2020 Annual Report. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.12.145.239/84d.64c.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CVSO-2020-Annual-Report-revised.pdf>

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

1.0 VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the largest integrated health care system in the U.S. There are 10 major health care facilities and 60 outpatient clinics throughout California alone. San Mateo County is near two of the major health care facilities in the VHA system, VA Palo Alto Health Care System and VA San Francisco.⁴¹

The VA Palo Alto Health Care System and VA San Francisco, in partnership with other service providers, administer several programs designed to assist veterans, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. HUD-VASH is a collaboration between HUD, the VA, and local Public Housing Agencies that provides housing subsidies and supportive services to veterans experiencing homelessness and their families, with the goal of finding and sustaining permanent housing. In the HUD-VASH program, HUD provides rental assistance vouchers through public housing authorities to veterans who are eligible for VA health care services, and who are experiencing homelessness. VA case managers provide and/or connect veterans with supportive services, including health care, mental health treatment, and substance use counseling to aid in recovery processes and housing stability. In 2019, HUD-VASH served 90,749 veterans nationally with active HUD-VASH vouchers, which is the highest utilization number and rate of any VA homeless program.⁴² As of October 2020, there were approximately 146 veterans or veteran households being served by the HUD-VASH program through VA San Francisco and VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

A. VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) consists of three inpatient facilities located in California at Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Livermore, and it includes seven community-based outpatient clinics in San Jose, Fremont, Capitola, Monterey, Stockton, Modesto, and Sonora. VAPAHCS provides a full range of patient care services in the areas of medicine, surgery, psychiatry, rehabilitation, neurology, oncology, dentistry, geriatrics, and extended care. VAPAHCS operates nearly 800 beds, including beds at three nursing homes and a 100-bed homeless domiciliary.

The average cost of care for veterans served by the VA Palo Alto Health Care system's HCHV program between 2014 and 2020 was \$6,460, with services totals ranging from \$70 to \$35,436.

(a) DEMOGRAPHICS OF VETERANS SCREENED FOR ENROLLMENT AGE

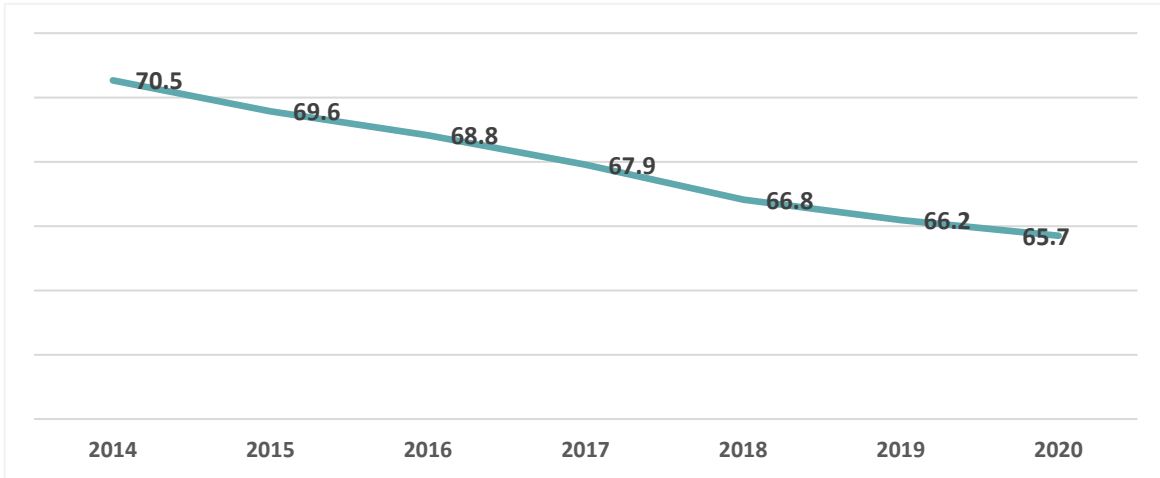
According to data provided by VAPAHCS, those screened for enrollment in VAPAHCS skew older than the overall San Mateo County veteran population. 58.4 percent of the entire estimated veteran population

⁴¹ California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. (2020). *CVSO 2020 Annual Report*. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.12.145.239/84d.64c.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CVSO-2020-Annual-Report-revised.pdf>

⁴² VHA Office of Mental Health. (2019, December 6). *Veterans Experiencing Homelessness*. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp>

was over 65 in 2018. In the same year, 66.8 percent of those screened for enrollment in VAPAHCS were over 65. The average age of those screened for enrollment has declined for the past six years. In 2020, the average age of enrollee was 65.7 years.

Figure 23: Average Age of the VAPAHCS Enrollees by Year, San Mateo County, VAPAHCS FY 2014 -2020



Source: Data provided by VAPAHCS in 2021 for enrollment years 2014 – 2020.

(b) ELIGIBILITY

Between 2014 to 2020, of those screened for eligibility at VAPAHCS, applicants in the “Unknown” and “Non-service Connected Pensioner and other NSC” categories saw the biggest decline and there was a 15 percent decline in those screened. In the last year, 43 percent of those screened for eligibility in the system were of “unknown” eligibility status. Of those veterans with known eligibility status, most were “Service Connected.” Both enrollees who are eligible under “Service Connected” and “HUD Means Test Eligible” status, have increased in the past six years.

Table 9: Number of the VAPAHCS Enrollees by Eligibility Category, San Mateo County, VAPAHCS FY 2014 -2020 Data

Eligibility of Enrollees	2014	2020	% Change 2014 to 2020
Aid/Attendance	82	55	-33%
Excluded	158	64	-59%
Fee Only	18	0	-100%
HUD Means Test Eligible	653	815	25%
Means Test Ineligible	1229	800	-35%
Non-Veteran	32	8	-75%
Non-Service Connected (NSC) Pensioner and Other NSC	1481	991	-33%

Service Connected	2225	2400	8%
Unknown	4767	4098	-14%
Unknown Means Test	341	79	-77%
Other	218	205	-6%
Total	11204	9515	-15%

Source: Data provided by VAPAHCS in 2021 for enrollment years 2014 – 2020.

(c) CITY OF RESIDENCE

Enrollment data for VAPAHCS indicates that veterans residing in San Mateo County who were screened for eligibility are most concentrated in Daly City, City of San Mateo, and Redwood City. In 2020, 9,515 veterans were screened for enrollment in the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Of those veterans, 9,151 resided in the State of California; 283 had unknown residential addresses, and 117 veterans resided out of state in places ranging from Corpus Christi, Texas to Fort Myers, Florida.

Table 10: Number of Veterans by City, San Mateo County, VAPAHCS FY 2014 -2020 Data

City	Number of Enrollees 2020
Atherton	59
Belmont	337
Brisbane	109
Burlingame	352
Colma	77
Daly City	1322
East Palo Alto	1
Foster City	309
Half Moon Bay	279
Hillsborough	75
Menlo Park	568
Millbrae	254
Pacifica	769
Portola Valley	57

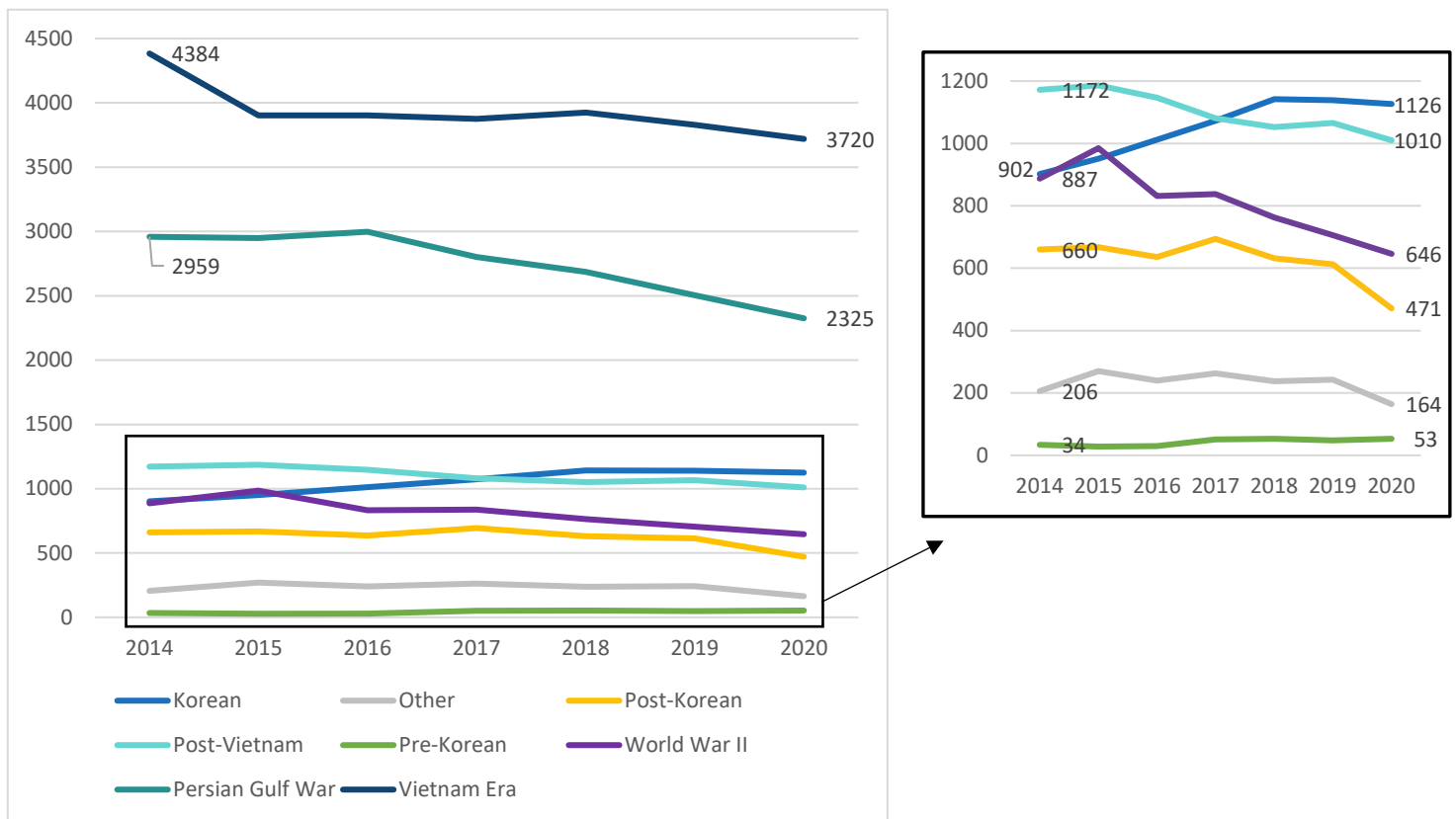
Redwood City	1084
San Bruno	645
San Carlos	347
San Mateo	1170
South San Francisco	847
Woodside	70

Source: Data provided by VAPAHCS in 2021 for enrollment years 2014 – 2020.

(d) SERVICE PERIOD

The largest proportion (34.1 percent) of San Mateo County veterans served during the Vietnam-era. Similarly, the largest portion of veterans screened for enrollment in VAPAHCS served during the Vietnam-era. Similar to overall enrollment statistics, screening of Vietnam-era veterans for VAPAHCS decreased from 4,384 to 3,720 between 2014 and 2020. While there has been an overall increase in Gulf War-era veterans in San Mateo County’s overall veteran population, that population decreased in terms of VAPAHCS enrollment between 2014 and 2020. Every service group declined in screening for VAPAHCS enrollment except for Korean and Pre-Korean-era veterans.

Figure 24: Proportion of the VAPAHCS Enrollees by Period of Military Service, San Mateo County, VAPAHCS FY 2014 -2020 Data



i. VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM HUD-VASH PROGRAM

As of October 2020, the VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) and Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo actively serve approximately 82 veteran households enrolled in the HUD-VASH program. 12.2 percent of veterans or veteran households served by the HUD-VASH program through VAPAHCS have a female head of household, while 87.8 percent of voucher recipients had a male head of household. The majority of veterans served by this program were 1-person households (81.7 percent). The average household monthly assistance for veteran and veteran households served by the VAPAHCS HUD-VASH program is approximately \$1,682.

ii. VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS (HCHV) PROGRAM

The VAPAHCS administers the Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program (HCHV), which is a program that serves as a hub for a variety of housing and other services that allow the VA a way of reaching and assisting veterans experiencing homelessness and offering them entry into VA care. A core component of the HCHV program is outreach to vulnerable veterans who are not currently receiving services and engaging them in treatment and rehabilitation programs.⁴³

Chronic homelessness status is determined at HCHV program intake. Of the veterans experiencing homelessness served by this program in 2020, 47.5 percent of clients were chronically homeless. This is significantly less than the percentage of veterans in 2014 who were served by the HCHV program and experiencing chronic homelessness (59.8 percent).

In 2020 thus far, VAPAHCS' HCHV programs located in San Mateo County served approximately 80 veterans as of October 2020. Of the clients served by the HCHV program, 25 percent specified that their housing status at exit from the program was housing rented through the HUD-VASH program. The next most common housing status for clients exiting the HCHV program was emergency shelter (11.2 percent), followed by places not meant for habitation, such as a vehicle or anywhere outside (8.8 percent). 2014 had a comparable percentage of veterans indicate their HCHV program exit destination was housing rented with HUD-VASH (19.7 percent), while the same proportion of clients' most frequent response was 'don't know' (19.7 percent). The second and third most common housing status after the HCHV program in San Mateo County were the VA Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Program (10.3 percent) and equally places not meant for habitation (9.4 percent) and staying or living in a family member's room (9.4 percent).

⁴³ VHA Office of Mental Health. (2020, September 21). Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/homeless/hchv.asp>

B. SAN FRANCISCO VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

i. SAN FRANCISCO VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM HUD-VASH PROGRAM

As of October 2020, the San Francisco VA Health Care System’s HUD-VASH program serves approximately 64 veteran households through the HUD-VASH program in partnership with the Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo. Heads of household for veterans and veteran families served by the San Francisco VA HUD-VASH program were 14.1 percent female, and 85.9 percent male. Additionally, 71.9 percent of veterans served by this program were individuals, while 28.1 percent of veterans served had two or more members of their household. The average monthly assistance for households served by the San Francisco VA HUD-VASH program is approximately \$1,783.

2.0 SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY STATUS

According to 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates, almost 14 percent of San Mateo County veterans have a service-related disability, defined as a disability due to injury or illness that was incurred in or aggravated by military service. The rate in San Mateo County is a significantly lower than proportion of veterans with a service-related disability in California (28.7 percent) and the U.S. (21.8 percent). The VA decides about the severity of an individual’s disability based on the evidence submitted during the claims process or through data that the VA obtains from military records, and this determination affects the amount of basic benefit paid. The VA Disability Compensation benefit ranges from \$133 to over \$3,400 per month, depending on factors like the severity of the disability, if the disabled individual has a spouse, child(ren), or dependent parent(s), spouse disability status, and unemployment due to the disability. The VA rates disability from 0 percent to 100 percent, using 10 percent increments (e.g., 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent). Individuals with a 0 percent ranking have a service-connected condition that was determined not to prevent them from daily activities, while higher rating statuses receive additional benefits.⁴⁴ It is estimated that of the 25,226 veterans in San Mateo County, 3,485 have an identified service-connected disability, and 31.7 percent of them have a disability that ranks 70 percent or higher, up from 21 percent in 2014.⁴⁵

Table 11: Service-Connected Disability Rating Status for Adult Civilian Veterans by Geography, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates

	San Mateo County	California	U.S.
Has no service-connected disability rating	86.2%	79.1%	78.2%
Has a service-connected disability rating:	13.8%	20.9%	21.8%
0 percent	5.7%	6.2%	4.9%
10 or 20 percent	29.2%	28.8%	28.6%
30 or 40 percent	17.9%	16.0%	16.5%

⁴⁴ Military.com. (2020, February 26). Veteran Disability Compensation. <https://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/veteran-disability-compensation.html>

⁴⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). B21100: Service-Connected Disability-Rating Status and Ratings for Civilian Veterans 18 and Over. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. data.census.gov.

50 or 60 percent	10.6%	12.1%	12.8%
70 percent or higher	31.7%	30.9%	31.7%
Rating not reported	4.9%	6.1%	5.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018). B21100: Service-Connected Disability-Rating Status and Ratings for Civilian Veterans 18 and Over. 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2020 from data.census.gov.

3.0 SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) is a major public health problem for both veterans and non-veterans in the United States, and can include dependency on alcohol, illicit and prescription drugs, and nicotine. SUDs can have significant negative impacts on mental and physical health, work performance, housing status, and social function. For veterans, SUDs can co-occur with and complicate and exasperate other conditions or issues, such as mental health conditions, societal challenges, homelessness, criminal justice involvement, or unemployment. Since 1940, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been working on addressing SUD in active service members and veterans through research, extensive studies, and treatment. A study conducted in 2017 found that veterans with a SUD were more than twice as likely to commit suicide than those without a SUD, and women veterans with a SUD had five times the suicide risk compared to women veterans without a SUD.⁴⁶

Co-occurring Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and SUDs are particularly harmful for veterans, and there is a strong correlation between these two conditions. 27 percent, or more than 2 out of 10, veterans with PTSD also have a Substance Abuse Disorder. Additionally, more than 1 in 4 veterans who undergo treatment for SUD also has PTSD. VA Medical Centers throughout the United States have PTSD-SUD Specialists working specifically treat co-occurring PTSD and SUD.⁴⁷

4.0 TRAUMA AND POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a condition that occurs after life-threatening events like military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults. Many trauma survivors are able to function normally, however some people have stress reactions that require treatment, and these reactions may worsen over time without it. Untreated trauma can turn into PTSD, which includes symptoms that severely impact daily quality-of-life, like flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, and emotional numbness. Additional physical and psychological symptoms of PTSD include depression,

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2018, October 25). Substance Use Disorders. VA Office of Research and Development. <https://www.research.va.gov/topics/sud.cfm>

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2019, October 17). PTSD and Substance Abuse in Veterans. PTSD: National Center for PTSD. https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/related/substance_abuse_vet.asp

substance abuse, memory or cognitive issues, difficulties in social life, occupational instability, marital problems, family discord, difficulty parenting, and other mental and physical health issues.⁴⁸

5.0 DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

Suicide prevention and treatment of mental health disorders has continuously been a focus of the VA. \$10.2 billion of the 2021 VA budget is dedicated to funding mental health services for veterans, \$682 million above 2020. Additionally, \$313 million is specifically dedicated to suicide prevention programs, a 32 percent increase from the 2020 budget.⁴⁹

Active-duty suicides reached a record high in 2018 of 325. In 2016, the last date for which data is available, the national suicide rate among veterans was approximately 30.5 per 100,000 or about 20 veterans per day.

The Veterans Crisis Hotline is a tool that can be used by both current and former military personnel, and those who care about veterans, who need immediate mental health help or crisis support.⁵⁰

6.0 COUNTY OF SAN MATEO HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Since 2016, there have been approximately 3,152 veterans served by the County of San Mateo Health Department according to data received from the department. Within the Health Department, there are several service divisions, including Aging and Adult Services (AAS), Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), Family Health Services (FHS), and the San Mateo County Medical Center. While many veterans are served each year by the San Mateo County Health Department, veteran status is self-reported by those served and not required to obtain services, and thus the number of veterans served by the Health Department is likely undercounted. The data represented here is based on this self-report and represents an area of continued focus for improvement in data collection and analysis for the Department.

Since 2016, a total of 1,446 veterans have utilized Aging and Adult Services (AAS) in San Mateo County according to data from the County of San Mateo Health Department. Approximately 793 veterans in San Mateo County have utilized Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) since 2016 according to Department data. In terms of Family Health Services (FHS), an estimated 81 veterans have used FHS in San Mateo County according to data from the County of San Mateo Health Department.

⁴⁸ Military.com. (2020, October 7). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. <https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-overview.html>

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2020, October 2). VA strengthens care and benefits for Veterans with \$243 billion budget request for fiscal year 2021 [Press release]. <https://www.va.gov/budget/docs/summary/fy2021VAsBudgetPressRelease.pdf>

⁵⁰ Military.com. (2020a). Suicide Prevention. <https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/suicide-prevention>

A. SAN MATEO MEDICAL CENTER (SMMC)

Veteran status is gathered as part of the registration or intake process in the form of a Veteran Status question, or by patients indicating that they have VA health insurance coverage. While SMMC does try to collect information on veteran status, they are reliant on veteran self-reporting in most cases, which does not necessarily capture the entire picture. Since 2016, approximately 832 veterans have utilized San Mateo Medical Center services.

B. HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS/FARMWORKER HEALTH PROGRAM

The San Mateo County Health Care for the Homeless and Farm Worker Health (HCH/FH) program coordinates medical, dental, and behavioral health care services for people experiencing homelessness throughout San Mateo County. HCH/FH is a Public Health Act Section 330(g)(h) program that receives federal funds from the Health Resources and Services Administration, and grants ‘Federally Qualified Health Center’ status to San Mateo County Health’s outpatient clinics.⁵¹ In 2019, the HCH/FH program served 38 veterans in San Mateo County through the SMMC and community partners. Veterans served by HCH/FH in 2019 had a median age of 55, were mostly male (94.7 percent), and primarily reside in emergency shelters (78.8 percent).

7.0 SAN MATEO COUNTY LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY AND COVID-19

In 2020, the San Mateo County Pride Center was invited to participate in creating the long-term COVID-19 recovery plan for San Mateo County. Recognizing that the “COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on many underserved and vulnerable communities,” the Pride Center created a survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ community in San Mateo County. The Pride Center, along with its community partners, distributed the survey to their community members in the fall of 2020. The goal of the survey was to understand how the pandemic has affected different communities in the county. The survey garnered 532 usable responses from people identifying as LGBTQ+ and living in or near San Mateo County. The survey analysis report begins with a disclaimer concerning the limitations of digital surveys in both access to who can respond and flattening the diversity of identities represented by respondents.

In evaluating the impacts of COVID-19, the survey found disparate impacts among community members of different identities. Trans and non-binary respondents reported greater difficulty in receiving stipend checks or unemployment benefits (4.3 times) and moving into unsafe or unstable housing (4.2 times) than cis gender respondents. Non-heterosexual respondents were more likely to become unemployed (6.7 times) and have trouble receiving stipend checks or unemployment benefits (6.7 times) than heterosexual

⁵¹ San Mateo Medical Center. (2016, April 28). HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS/FARMWORKER HEALTH PROGRAM. San Mateo County Health. <https://www.smchealth.org/smmc-hchfh-board>

respondents. Non-white respondents of all races were 2.5 times more likely to have trouble receiving stipend checks or unemployment benefits than white respondents. Respondents with disabilities were 7.3 times more likely to have moved into unsafe or unstable housing than respondents without disabilities. Respondents with disabilities also faced greater difficulty in affording medical care and experiencing violence and harassment. Respondents under age 30 had more difficulty accessing mental health support and supportive resources during the pandemic.

The survey found that the greatest negative impacts of COVID-19 were on the emotional or mental health of respondents. 85 percent of the respondents reported negative impacts including being unable to access needed social support (76 percent), being unable to access the activities that sustained them prior to the pandemic (55 percent), and worsened mental health or inability to access adequate mental health support (26 percent).

The report concludes with direct quotes from respondents, with many of the respondents describing worsening mental health, loneliness, and isolation. There are seventeen quoted narrative statements on worsening mental health, with five mentioning fear or anxiety specifically. The statements also describe significant challenges with accessing resources like childcare, internet connectivity, safe transportation, and therapeutic support.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

1.0 SAN MATEO COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

The San Mateo County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) was established in 2012 and provides assistance to current or former service members that are involved in the criminal justice system by connecting them to needed services through the VA, with the goal of improving outcomes for this population. The VTC is a collaborative effort between the San Mateo County Court, District Attorney's Office, Private Defender Program, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), VA Veterans Justice Outreach program, the San Mateo County Jail, and the Probation Department. Participants in VTC are closely supervised by Probation, expected to utilize VA services, and are required to appear in court monthly for a progress review. Services that are provided to VTC participants can include mental health treatment and therapy, substance abuse counseling, health care, employment/job training and housing assistance. Upon completion of the VTC, participants may be eligible for fine reductions, probation termination, or could have their charges expunged and record sealed. In order to be eligible for VTC services, participants must have a prior or current membership to the United States Military and be eligible for VA benefits, have a PTSD, Substance Use Disorder (SUD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), sexual trauma, or other mental health or substance abuse disorder that is a result of military service, and be eligible for probation and thus is not considered dangerous to the community.⁵²

⁵² County of San Mateo Probation. (2020). *Veterans Treatment Court | Probation. Veterans Treatment Court.* <https://probation.smcgov.org/veterans-treatment-court>

2.0 **SAN MATEO COUNTY JAIL**

On November 24, 2020 there were 19 people in custody of the San Mateo County Jail who are either active duty service members or veterans. Of the 19 people in custody, 18 are male and 10 identified as veterans versus service members.

VETERAN NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study is a comprehensive county-wide assessment aimed at better understanding the needs of people who have ever served in the U.S. military and their families, as well as available services and the gaps in services for veterans who live or work in San Mateo County.

The Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study included four key activities designed to learn more about the needs of veterans and their families:

1. **Veteran Demographic Report:** Compilation of a broad Veteran Demographic Report providing updated data on key demographics for the veteran population in San Mateo County. This report expands upon data included in the 2014 needs assessment process.
2. **Communitywide Veteran Survey:** Distribution and analysis of a communitywide needs assessment survey targeted to those who have ever served in the U.S. military and their families, as well as available services and the gaps in services for veterans who live, work, or attend school in San Mateo County.
3. **Communitywide Veteran Service Provider Survey:** Distribution and analysis of a communitywide survey targeted to organizations and programs serving San Mateo County that provide services to or focus on those who have ever served in the U.S. military and their families.
4. **Focus Groups and Stakeholder Interviews:** Focus Groups and stakeholder interviews were conducted virtually with a variety of individual and organizational stakeholders who live, work, or attend school in San Mateo County.

This section explores the needs assessment activities conducted to-date, the data collected through each of these activities, and it provides an analysis of the service needs and barriers faced by those who have ever served in the U.S. military and their families in San Mateo County.

1.0 COMMUNITYWIDE VETERAN SURVEY

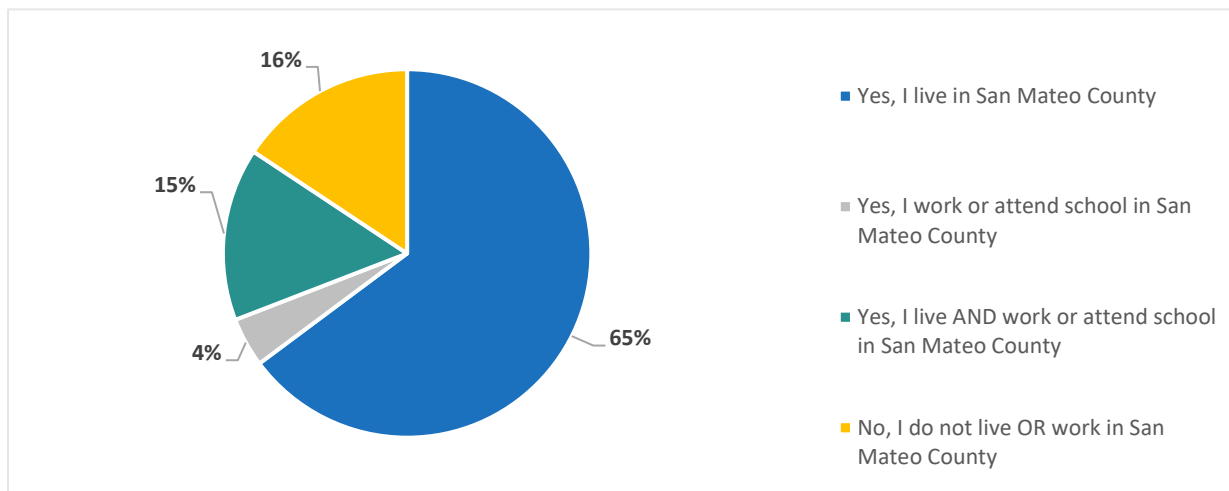
From February to April 2021, a communitywide Veterans Needs Assessment Survey was made available to all veterans and those closely connected to veterans (friends, family, volunteers, etc.) who live, work, or attend school in San Mateo County. Respondents were notified of the survey via the County website, the VAPAHCS website, through web links included in outreach emails from the San Mateo County Veterans Services Office (CVSO), through the local community colleges, service providers, and community partners. The goal of the survey was to understand the available services and gaps in services for all veterans who live, work, or attend school in San Mateo County. To do so, the survey included 31 closed and open-ended questions asking about demographics, services utilized, outreach and knowledge of services, and perceptions of services utilized. The survey was anonymous except for three optional questions at the end which asked if veterans wanted to provide their email to be connected to services. San Mateo County Human Services Agency and the CVSO int will utilize the surveys and other aspects of

the Veteran Needs Assessment process to inform recommendations for better meeting the needs of our community’s veterans and families.

A. DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

During the period in which it was open, the Veterans Needs Assessment Survey received 810 total survey responses. Of those responses, 683 responses were considered usable. Usable responses are those to which survey respondents answered that they live, work, or attend school in San Mateo County. The first question of the survey asks if the respondent lives, works, or attends school in San Mateo County. The respondents must answer “yes” to continue the survey. Out of 810 total responses, the majority, 65 percent, responded that they live in San Mateo County.

Figure 25: Veterans Living, Working, or Attending School in San Mateo County



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

90 percent of respondents answered the question “Please let us know about your own or direct family connection to military service.” Of those responses, 94 percent were active or previous military personnel; 559 respondents had previously served and 9 are currently serving in the military. 58 percent of the respondents who answered that they had a close family member who is currently serving or had served also identified as veterans. Only 7 percent of all the respondents or 51 respondents answered that they have a close family member who is currently serving or had served in the military and they were not themselves veterans. Of these 51 respondents, the majority responded that they were spouses, partners, or the children of veterans.

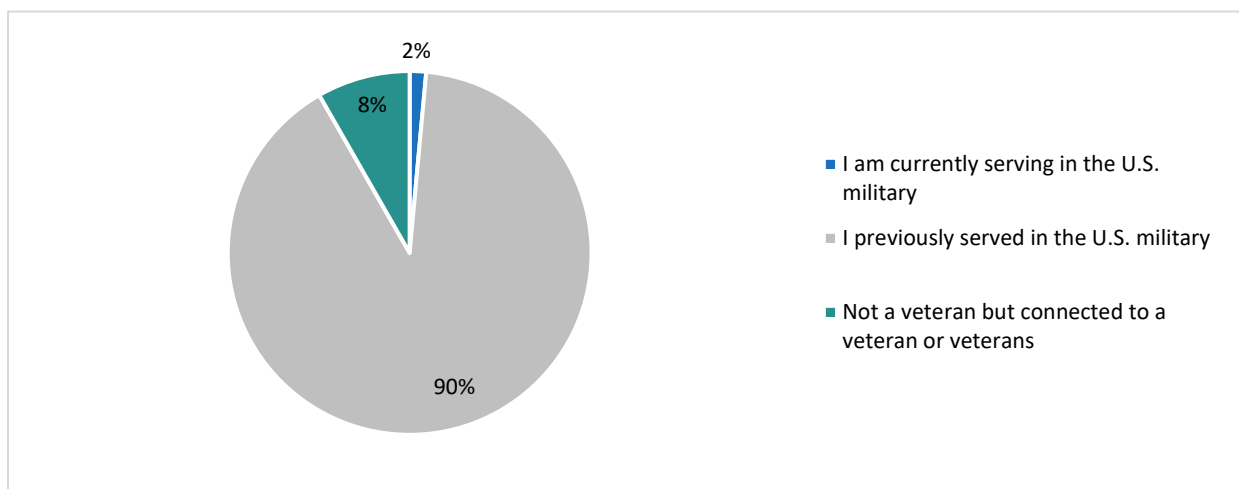
Table 12: Connection to Military Service

Answer Choices	Veteran	Non-Veteran
I am currently serving in the U.S. military	1%	0%
I previously served in the U.S. military (for any length of time)	61%	0%

I have a close family member (spouse, partner, child, parent, sibling) who is currently serving in the U.S. military	2%	1%
I have a close family member (spouse, partner, child, parent, sibling) who previously served in the U.S. military	8%	4%
I work/volunteer with a veteran service organization	3%	0%
I am a member of a veteran organization	11%	0%
I have a close connection with veterans	6%	0%
None of the Above	2%	0%
Other	1%	0%

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

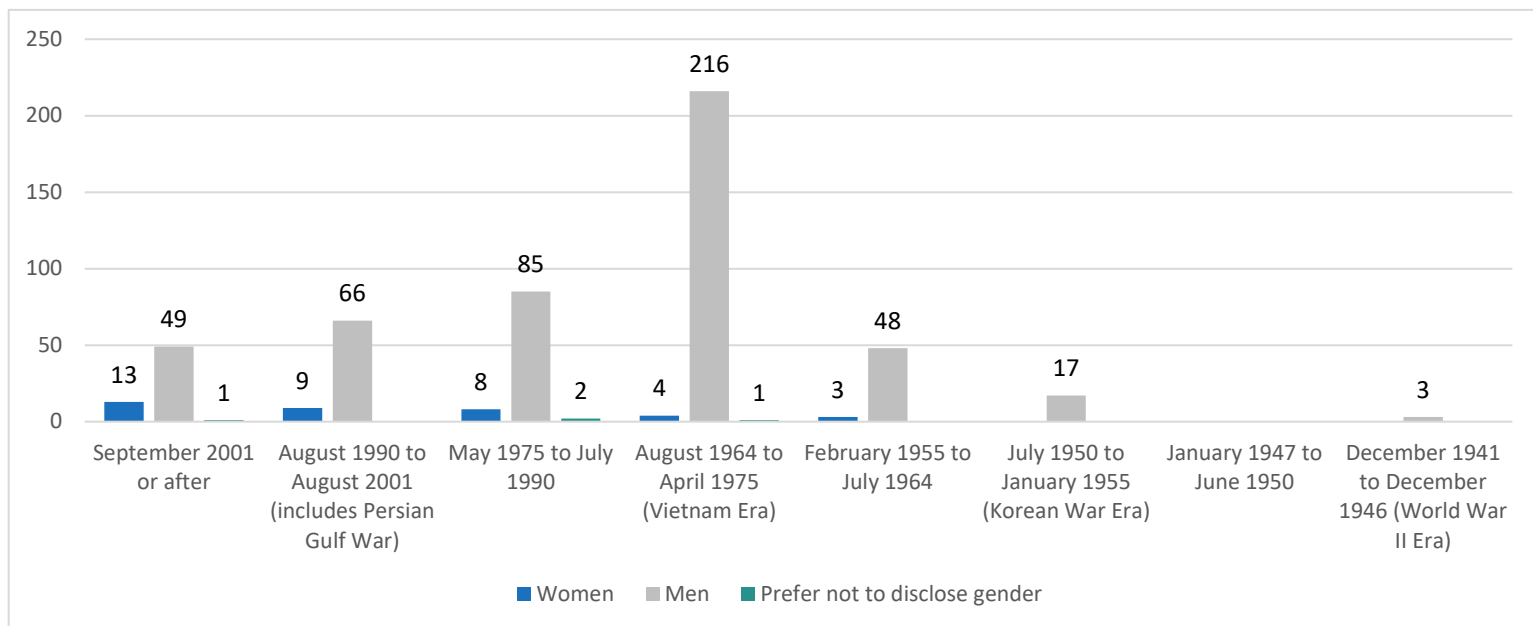
Figure 26: Connection to Military Service



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Of the respondents who reported that they are veterans, the largest cohort served from August 1964 to April 1975 (Vietnam Era) and most reported an honorable discharge. Veterans who identified as women and veterans who preferred not to disclose their gender identity were most likely to serve in periods from the Vietnam Era to the present. However, it is also likely that younger veterans and those newly separated from military service may not have been reached in higher numbers due to lack of awareness and/or use of CVSO services at the present time. Overall outreach for the survey, though geared to the general public, included direct outreach to veterans who had previously engaged with the CVSO in some manner. Other activities in the needs assessment illustrate the challenges many newly separated veterans faced in learning about, understanding, and accessing veteran services post-discharge.

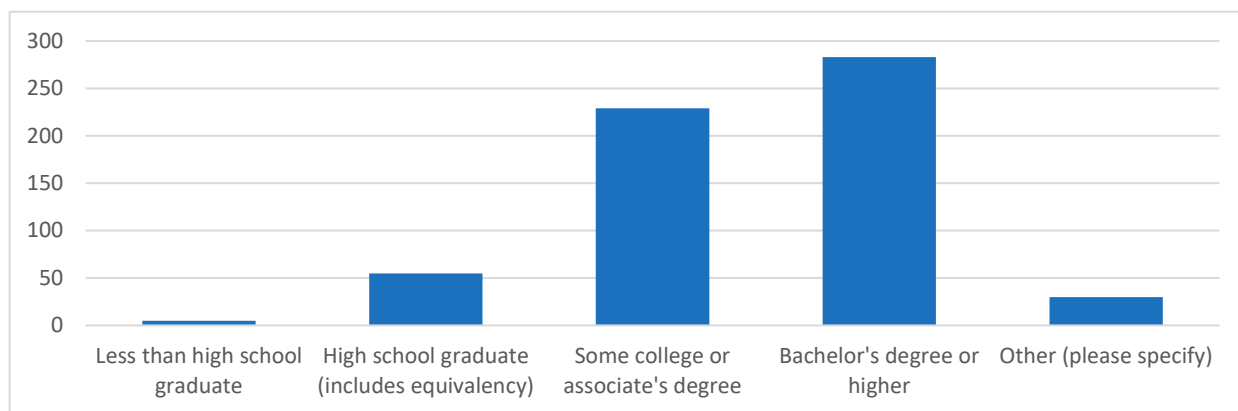
Figure 27: Period of Military Service



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Most of the veteran respondents reported having completed at least some college in response to questions about their level of educational attainment. Of those who answered “other,” the majority provided narrative responses that indicated that they had obtained graduate degrees.

Figure 28: Highest Level of Education Completed



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

When asked about current employment status, the largest cohort of survey respondents answered that they were retired and not employed (45 percent). The second largest cohort were veterans who responded that that are employed full-time (27 percent).

Table 13: Current Employment Status

What is your current employment status?	Number of Veterans	Percentage
Retired and not employed	250	45%
Employed full-time, or on paid vacation or sick leave from full-time work	151	27%
Self-employed	32	6%
Permanently or temporarily disabled and not working	27	5%
Retired but employed part-time	22	4%
Not employed but looking for work	21	4%
Employed part-time, or on paid vacation or sick leave from part-time work	13	2%
Other (please specify)	12	2%
Retired but looking for work	11	2%
Not employed and not looking for work	8	1%
Permanently or temporarily disabled but working full- or part-time	5	1%
Permanently or temporarily disabled but looking for work	3	1%

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Most veterans responding to the Veterans Needs Assessment Survey, 72 percent, responded that they own their own home. About 4 percent of veterans reported that they may experience housing instability, responding that they “stay with family or friends on a temporary basis,” are “currently without housing,” or stay in “temporary or transitional housing.” The number of those experiencing housing instability, however, may be higher as the survey responses do not capture the housing stability or instability of those who own or rent their homes.

Table 14: Current Housing Status

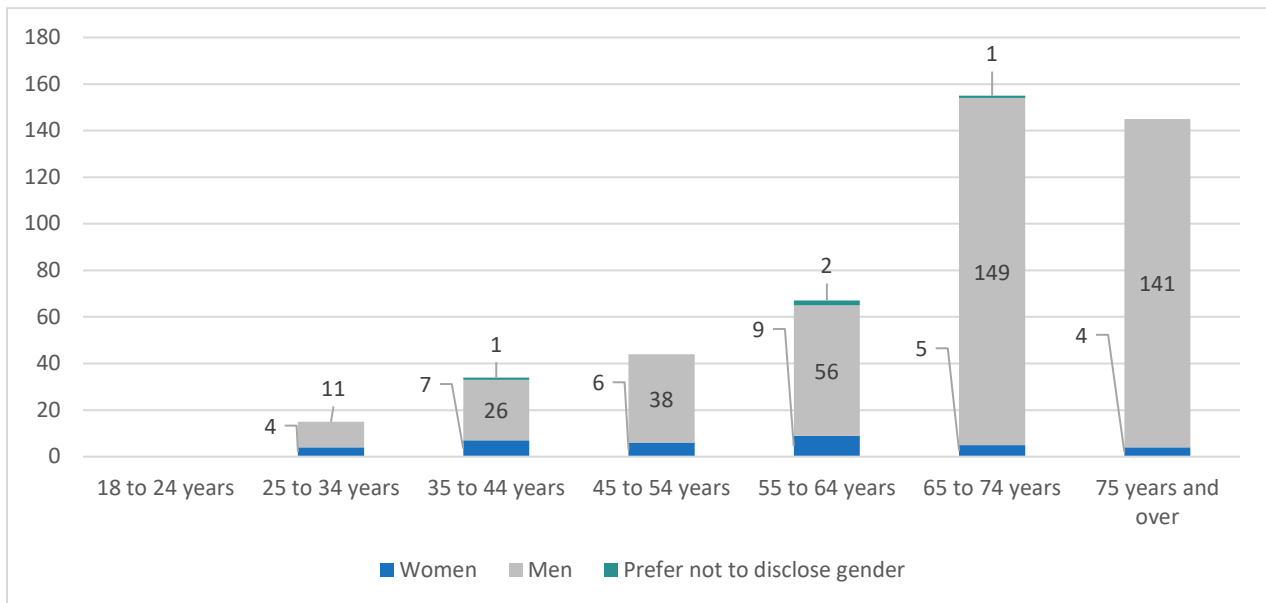
Housing Status	Number	Percentage
Own my home	397	72%
Rent my home	113	20%

I stay with family or friends on a long-term basis	16	3%
Other (please specify)	10	2%
Occupy place of residence with no payment of cash rent	8	1%
I stay with family or friends on a temporary basis	3	1%
I am currently without housing	3	1%
Temporary or Transitional Housing	3	1%
I stay in a medical or mental health facility	0	0%

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

The Veteran Needs Assessment Survey respondents skewed older in age with more than 65 percent of all respondents over age 65. Female respondents were slightly younger, with the largest age cohort between age 55 and 64.

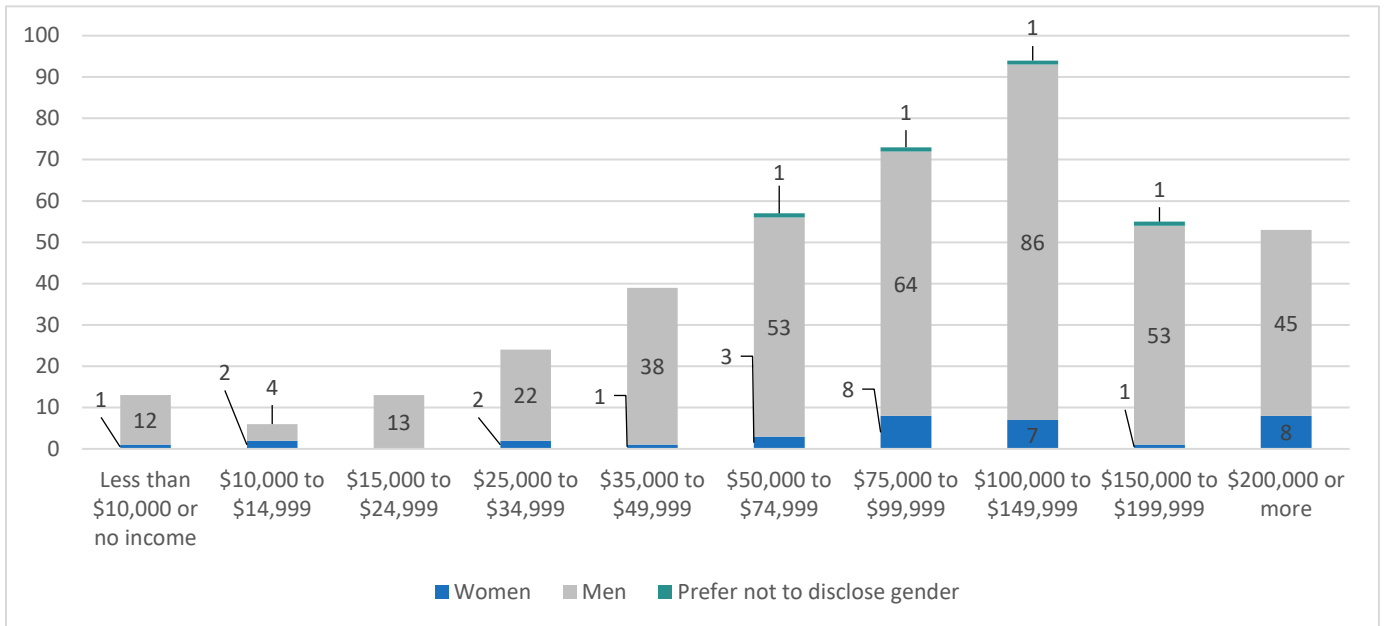
Figure 29: Respondent Age



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

When surveyed about annual household income, veteran respondents skewed higher in reported annual household income, with female veterans reporting slightly lower household incomes than male veterans and veterans who did not disclose their gender.

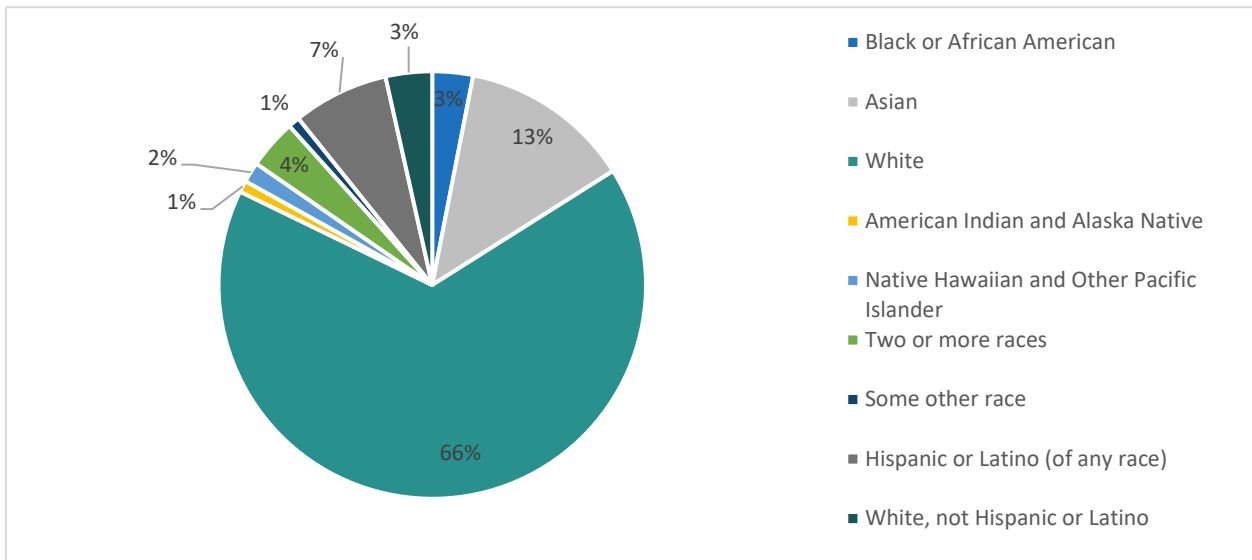
Figure 30: Annual Household Income



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

The veteran respondents who responded to the survey question regarding race and ethnicity identified as majority white. Asian was the second most represented demographic, and Hispanic was the third most represented as illustrated in Figure 30.

Figure 31: What is your race and ethnicity?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

In terms of marital status, most survey respondents were married (68 percent), 6 percent were widowed, 15 percent were divorced, and 7 percent had never been married.

B. VETERAN SERVICES AND BENEFITS

Most veteran respondents reported that they received no benefits (43 percent) or VA Health Care (43 percent). When asked about health insurance, the largest percentage used Medicare (37 percent), followed by VA Health Coverage (29 percent). Similarly, veterans and surveyed respondents who are non-veterans answered that medical or physical health care services and prescription medicine were the most well meet needs. Dental care, eye care, and counseling services were the needs with the highest number of respondents answering that these needs were “never met.” Assistance with addressing military sexual trauma was the only service in which the answer option “Never met” had a higher response rate than “Always met.”

Table 15: Which of the following VA Benefits do you or your immediate family members currently receive, if any? (choose any that apply)

VA Benefits	Response Percent	Responses
None	43%	220
VA Health Care	43%	218
VA Prescription Benefits	32%	161
VA Disability Compensation and Pension	29%	145
VA Home Loans	9%	46
VA Burial and Memorial Benefits	5%	26
VA Benefits for Dependents and Survivors	5%	24
VA Life Insurance (Veteran's Group Life Insurance/VGLI or Service-Disabled Veteran's Insurance/SDVI)	5%	23
VA Education and Training	5%	23
VA Vocational Rehabilitation	2%	10
Other (please specify)	2%	9
VA Transition Assistance	0%	2

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Table 16: Are you or a member of your family currently covered by any of the following types of health insurance or health coverage?

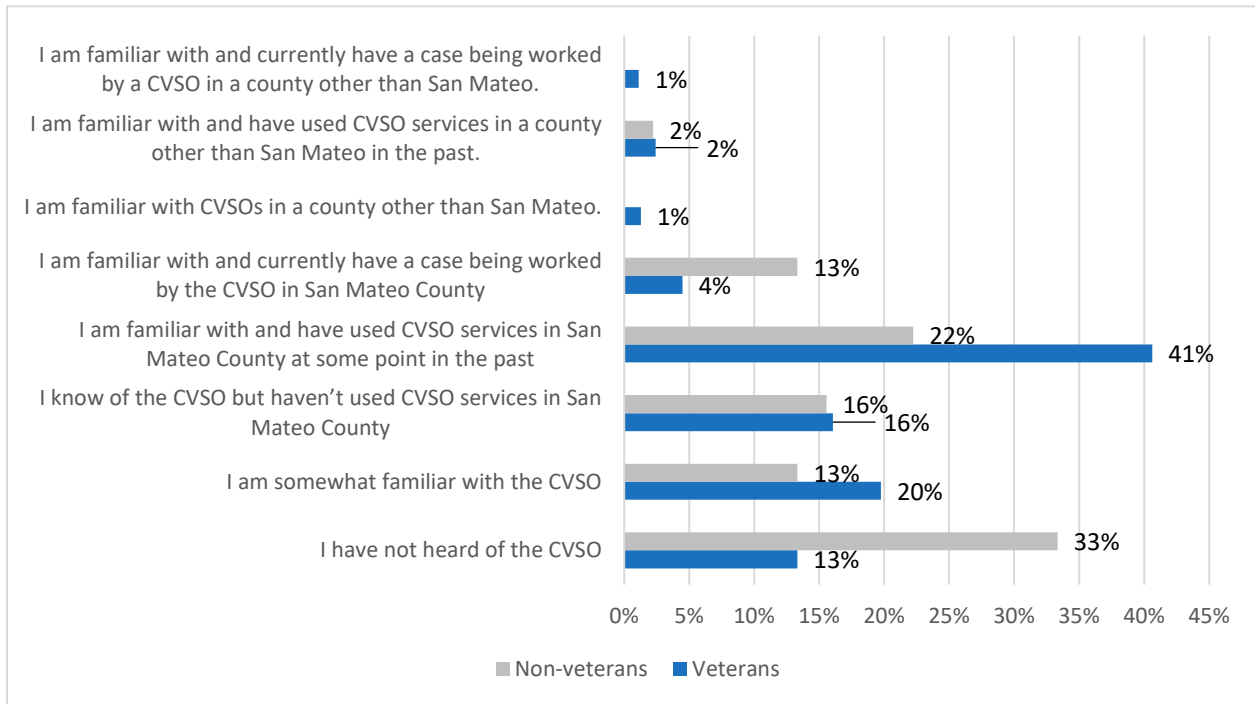
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
Medicare	37%	186
VA health coverage	29%	148
Private insurance through a current or former employer or union	20%	100
CHAMPUS, CHAMPVA, or TRICARE (health care benefits for veterans and veteran families through the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs)	4%	22
Other (please specify)	4%	18
No health insurance	2%	11
Insurance purchased directly from an insurance company	2%	10
Some other federal/state/local government program	1%	7
Medicaid/Medical Assistance	0%	2

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

C. VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE ACCESS

51 survey respondents were connected to veterans but had not served nor were actively serving. Of those respondents, most indicated that they were the spouse or child of a veteran. This cohort was less aware of the CVSO, with 33 percent having never heard of the CVSO, while only 13 percent of veteran respondents selected this answer option. Please see Figure 32 below.

Figure 32: How familiar are you with the San Mateo County Veterans Services Office (CVSO)?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Those closely connected to veterans were more likely to utilize or have a family member that received VA Benefits for Dependents and Survivors and VA Burial and Memorial Benefits than veterans. They were also more likely to use or have an immediate family member receive such benefits.

Table 17: Which of the following VA Benefits do you or your immediate family members currently receive, if any?

Benefits	Veterans	Non-Veterans
None	46%	23%
VA Health Care	44%	31%
VA Prescription Benefits	33%	17%
VA Disability Compensation and Pension	30%	14%
VA Home Loans	10%	9%
VA Life Insurance (Veterans' Group Life Insurance/VGLI or Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance/SDVI)	5%	3%
VA Education and Training	5%	6%
VA Burial and Memorial Benefits	4%	20%

VA Benefits for Dependents and Survivors	3%	29%
VA Vocational Rehabilitation	2%	3%
VA Transition Assistance	1%	3%
Answered	470	35

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Table 18: Which of these veteran organizations have you contacted at any time in the past five years?

Veteran Organizations	Veterans	Non-Veterans
County Veterans Service Office (CVSO)	85%	33%
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Veterans Health Administration (VHA)	64%	53%
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)	36%	53%
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): National Cemetery Administration	0%	0%
State Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet)	10%	10%
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)	11%	5%
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	11%	5%
Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)	4%	5%
American Legion	19%	8%
AMVETS	3%	3%
Nation's Finest (previously Veterans Resource Centers of America)	1%	5%
LifeMoves	3%	5%
I haven't connected with any of these organizations	15%	18%

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

D. GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

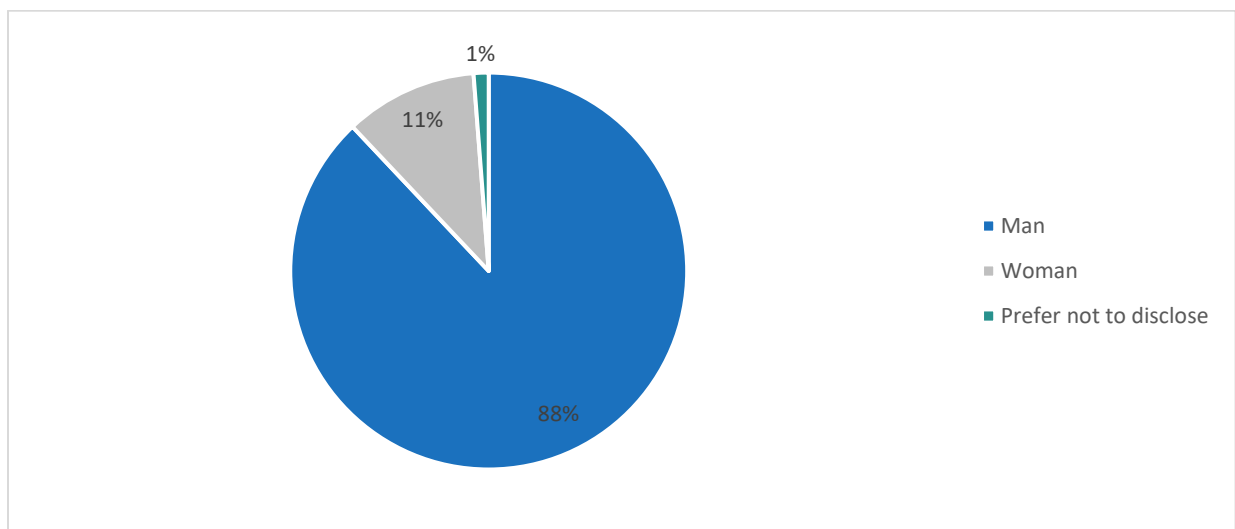
When asked about gender identity, 88 percent of the survey respondents identified as men, 11 percent identified as women, and 1 percent of the respondents preferred not to disclose their gender identity. Three respondents identified as transgender on the survey, while six respondents preferred not to disclose their gender identity.

Both veterans who identified as women and veterans who preferred not to disclose their gender identity were more likely to use no public benefits. Veterans who identified as women were the most likely to

respond that they had a disability. Respondents assessed whether services had met or had not met their needs similarly, regardless of gender identity so that analysis is not displayed here.

The Veterans Needs Assessment Survey asked about the provision of LGBTQ+ resources and services but did not ask respondents to identify their sexual identity. Don't Ask Don't Tell policies barred open discussion of sexuality amongst active military members until 2011. The University of California at Los Angeles Williams Institute notes in their policy brief, "Discharges Under the Don't Ask/Don't Tell Policy: Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities," that discharges under the policy numbered approximately 13,650 while it was in place between 1994 and 2010. The brief also found that women and minority groups increasingly faced discharges over the lifetime of the policy. The survey does not directly ask sexual orientation in recognition that Don't Ask Don't Tell and other discriminatory policies were likely on record during the period in which many of the respondents served.

Figure 33: Gender Identity of 492 Respondents



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Table 19: Which of the following public benefits do you currently receive, if any?

Answer Choices	Women	Men	Prefer not to disclose gender
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	3%	1%	0%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	0%	1%	0%
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	0%	0%	0%

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), including Pass through Child Support	0%	0%	0%
Social Security	23%	64%	0%
Unemployment insurance compensation	3%	3%	0%
Workers' compensation	0%	1%	0%
CalFresh	0%	1%	0%
Expedited CalFresh	0%	0%	0%
CalWORKS	0%	0%	0%
General Assistance	0%	0%	0%
Medi-Cal	3%	2%	0%
None	71%	32%	100%

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Table 20: Which of the following VA Benefits do you or your immediate family members currently receive, if any?

Answer Choices	Women	Men	Prefer not to disclose gender
VA Health Care	44%	44%	40%
VA Prescription Benefits	29%	33%	20%
VA Life Insurance (Veterans' Group Life Insurance/VGLI or Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance/SDVI)	9%	5%	0%
VA Home Loans	12%	9%	20%
VA Education and Training	9%	5%	0%
VA Vocational Rehabilitation	3%	2%	0%
VA Burial and Memorial Benefits	3%	4%	20%
VA Disability Compensation and Pension	35%	29%	40%
VA Benefits for Dependents and Survivors	3%	3%	0%
VA Transition Assistance	0%	0%	60%
None	43%	45%	46%

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Veteran respondents who identified as women were more likely to receive services at the VA or paid for by the VA. Veteran respondents who identified as men and veterans who preferred not to disclose their gender were more likely to have not received any health services in the past year.

Table 21: In the past year, did you use VA health care services, or did you have any of your health care paid for by the VA?

Answer Choices	Women	Men	Prefer not to disclose gender
Yes, I received services at the VA, or they were paid for by the VA	43%	39%	40%
No, I received services, not from the VA and were not paid for by the VA	20%	17%	0%
No, I did not receive any health care services	37%	41%	60%
Don't Know	0%	3%	0%

Table 22: If (your) needs are either partially or not currently being met, please tell us what some of the top reasons are. Please check your top five reasons.

Answer Choices	Women	Men	Prefer not to disclose gender
I do not have reliable transportation to access services	0%	3%	0%
I don't believe I qualify for the services or benefits I need	18%	27%	33%
I have been told I don't qualify for the services or benefits I need	18%	22%	33%
The services or benefits I need are not available	5%	6%	0%
I'm not sure where to get assistance	41%	31%	33%
The services or benefits I need are not available	0%	2%	0%
I don't have reliable internet/computer access or need assistance with access	0%	2%	0%
My work hours make it difficult to access services and benefits	9%	5%	0%
My personal or family schedule make it difficult to access services and benefits	5%	6%	0%

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

ii. GENDER AND DISABILITY

About half of all survey respondents answered that they had a disability. Veterans who identified as women were more likely to have a disability and more likely to have a 70 percent or higher disability

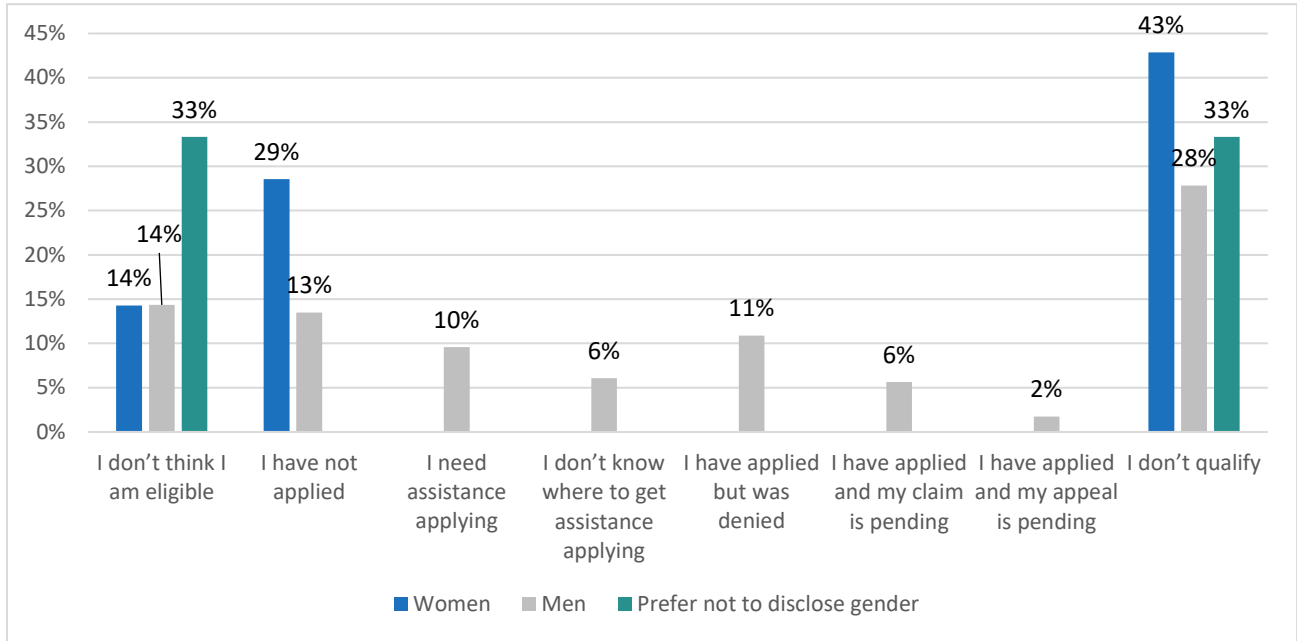
rating. On the question “If you are disabled but not receiving service-connected compensation, please tell us why,” 230 veterans who identified as men, seven veterans who identified as women, and three veterans who preferred not to disclose their gender provided an answer. Both veterans who identified as women and veterans who preferred not to disclose gender were more likely to have not applied for disability compensation because they did not think they are eligible.

Table 23: Do you have a disability? If yes, are you receiving service-connected compensation and what is your service-related disability rating?

Answer Choices	Men		Women		Prefer not to disclose gender	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
No	217	52%	16	46%	3	60%
Yes, 0 percent	15	4%	2	6%	0	0%
Yes, 10 to 20 percent	44	10%	1	3%	0	0%
Yes, 30 to 40 percent	19	5%	3	9%	0	0%
Yes, 50 to 60 percent	17	4%	3	9%	0	0%
Yes, 70 percent or higher	75	18%	9	26%	2	40%
Don't Know	33	8%	1	3%	0	0%
Total	420	1	35	100%	5	100%

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Figure 34: If you are disabled but not receiving service-connected compensation, please tell us why. Please check all that apply.



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

iii. LGBTQ+ CONCERNS

One of the goals of this report is to better understand the needs of LGBTQ+ veterans in San Mateo County. Don't Ask Don't Tell was implemented as official U.S. policy in 1994 and repealed in 2011. In those 17 years, the Boston Globe journalist Bryan Bender estimates that between 600 and 1,200 service members were discharged every year due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Because the policy was repealed less than a decade ago and there has been renewed conversation concerning the rights of transgender service members and veterans in the past few years, this survey refrains from asking about LGBTQ+ status. In order to understand concerns, however, the survey asks about perception of LGBTQ+ specific resources. In doing so, the survey responses show that for the three LGBTQ+ specific resource questions, veterans replying that their needs were never met in these areas are almost four times as great as veterans who replied that their needs were always met in these areas. The services included assistance finding employment, connecting with LGBTQ+ activities, social networking, or support, and housing needs as an LGBTQ+ veteran.

Table 24: Perception of LGBTQ+ Resources

Answer choices	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable/ Not Needed	Total

Assistance with finding employment that is responsive to my needs as a LGBTQ+ veteran	5	0	0	18	449	472
Connecting with LGBTQ+ activities, social networking, or support	5	0	1	19	446	471
Housing meeting my needs as an LGBTQ+ veteran	4	0	1	19	442	466

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

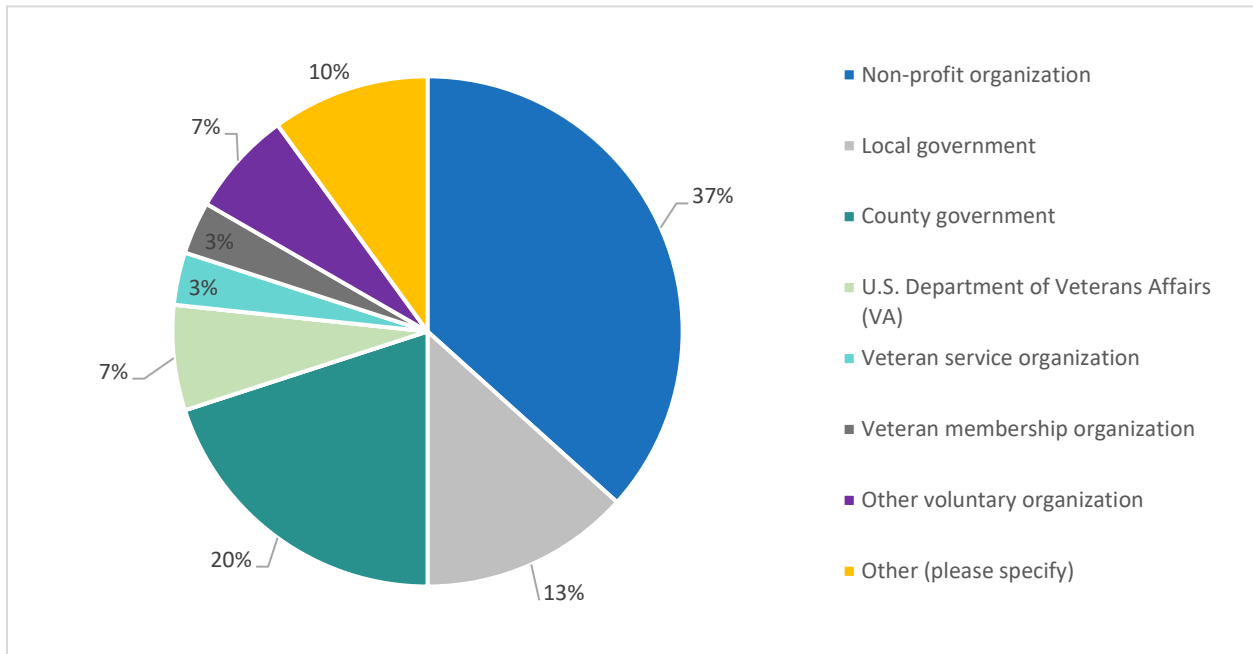
2.0 COMMUNITYWIDE VETERAN SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY

From February to April 2021, a veteran service provider survey was made available to non-profit service providers and others working on behalf of veterans and their families who live, work, or attend school in San Mateo County. Respondents were notified of the survey via a web link in emails sent out by San Mateo County Veterans Services Office (CVSO), through direct outreach to stakeholders, and through collaboration with the County’s many commissions, including the LGBTQ+ Commission. The goal of the survey was to understand the available services and gaps in services from the provider perspective. To do so, the survey included 33 closed and open-ended questions asking about the represented organization or program, services offered, outreach, and perception of services offered in San Mateo County and their accessibility. San Mateo County Human Services Agency, Collaborative Community Outcomes Branch, and the CVSO plan to utilize the surveys and other aspects of the Veteran Needs Assessment process to inform recommendations for better meeting the needs of our community’s veterans and families.

A. DESCRIPTION OF PROVIDERS

Thirty providers completed the Veteran Service Provider Survey for the San Mateo Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study. The Veteran Service Provider Survey respondents included representatives from a range of industries and organization types including the following: non-profit organizations (37 percent), county government agencies (20 percent), local government agencies (13 percent), VA representatives, veteran membership, voluntary, and “other” organizations.

Figure 35: Respondents to the Veteran Service Provider Survey



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

The provider respondents were mostly located in San Mateo County. Figure 2 below shows survey responses to the question “In which county is your organization and/or program located?” While there were many other possible response options available, including Alameda, Marin, and Napa Counties, the table below indicates the only answers that were selected for this question.

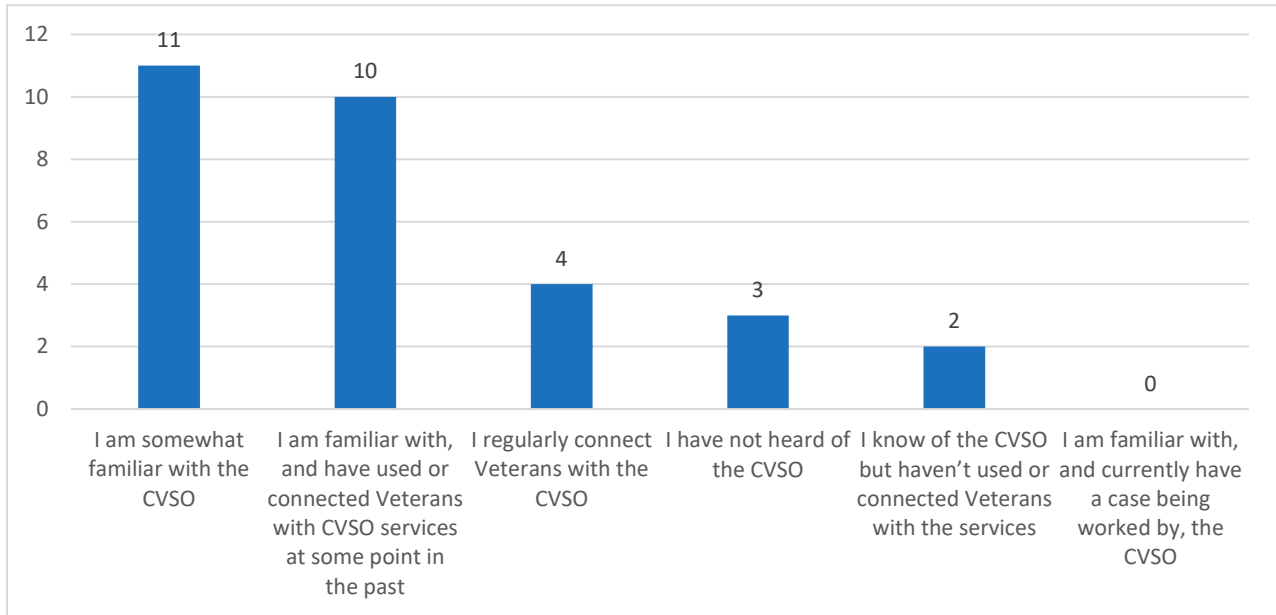
Figure 36: In which county is your organization and/or program located?

Answer Choices	Percent of Responses	Number of Responses
San Mateo County	87%	26
Multiple California counties	7%	2
City of San Francisco	3%	1
Nationwide	3%	1
Total	100%	30

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

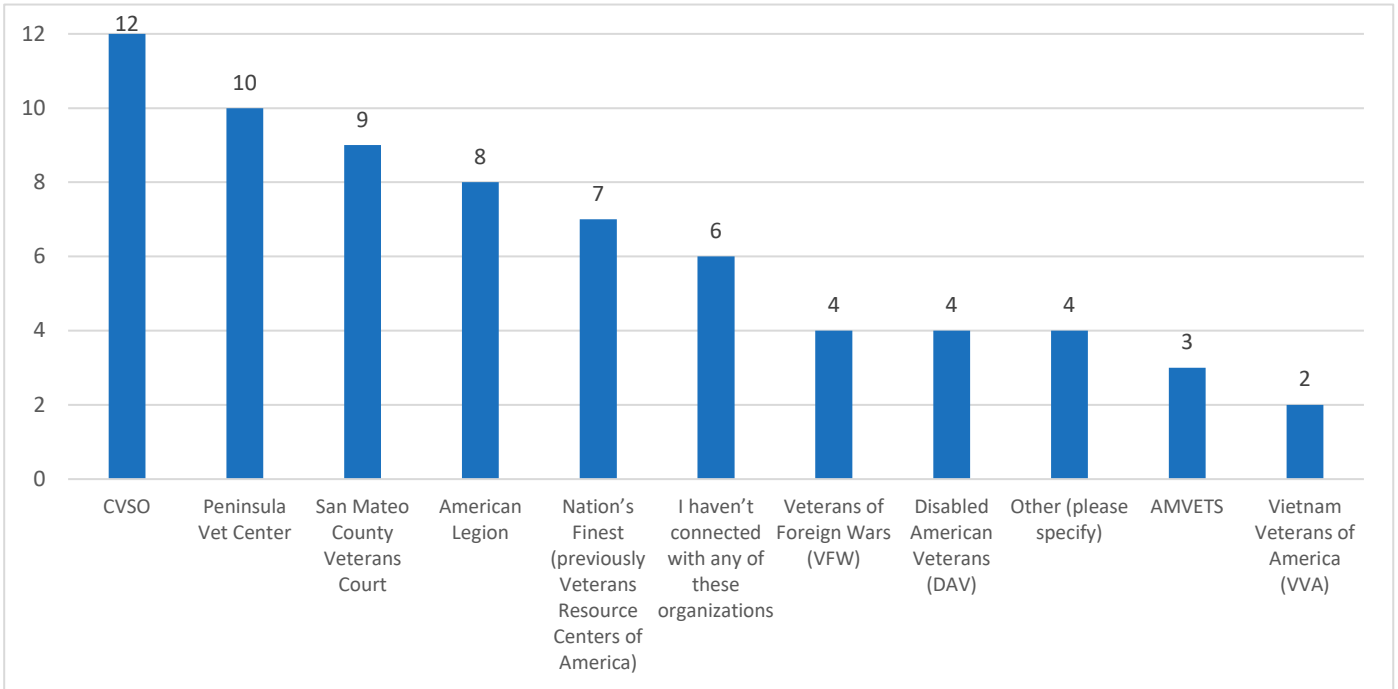
When asked about familiarity with the San Mateo CVSO, 83 percent of the provider respondents answered that they were either familiar with the CVSO or that they regularly connected with the office. In contrast, only 17 percent of the providers had never connected or had not heard of the CVSO. None of the providers reported that they had a case currently being worked on by the San Mateo CVSO. As shown by Figure 23 below, providers responded that the veterans’ organizations that they had most contacted were the CVSO, the Peninsula Vet Center, and San Mateo County Veterans Court. Fewer respondents answered that they had contacted organizations such as AMVETS and Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA).

Figure 37: What is your level of familiarity with the County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) in San Mateo County?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

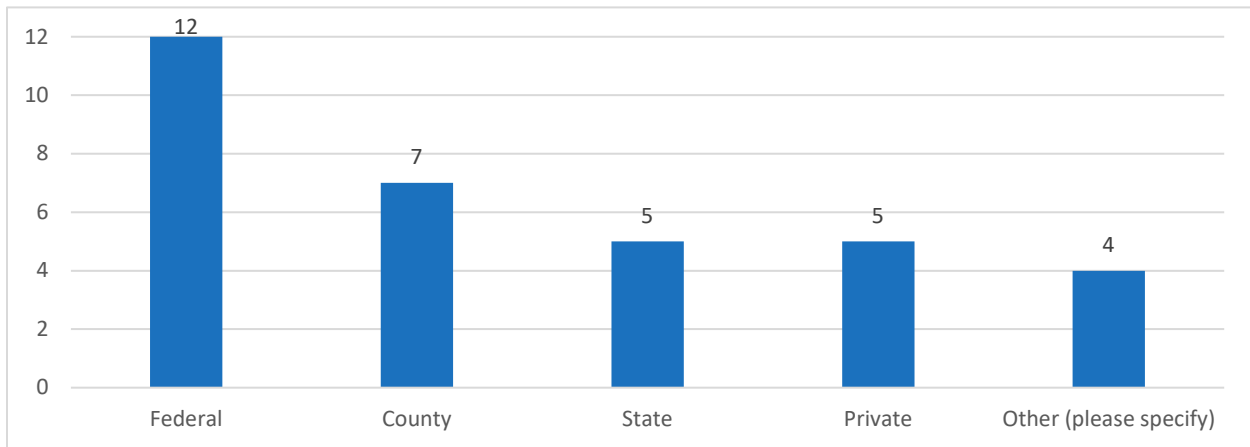
Figure 38: Which of these veterans' organizations have you contacted at any time?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

The organizations surveyed responded that they received funding from the federal, state, and county government, as well as from private donors. The most common source of funding reported by service provider respondents was from the federal government.

Figure 39: How does your organization receive funding to provide veteran services?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

B. POPULATIONS SERVED

When asked about the populations served, the providers who responded to this survey reported that they focus primarily on veterans who have served in the military or that they serve both veterans and other populations. The providers who answered “other” on questions about populations served stated that they served older adults who included veterans and previously incarcerated veterans. None of the organizations surveyed reported that they serve or focus solely on either active duty personnel or families of active duty personnel.

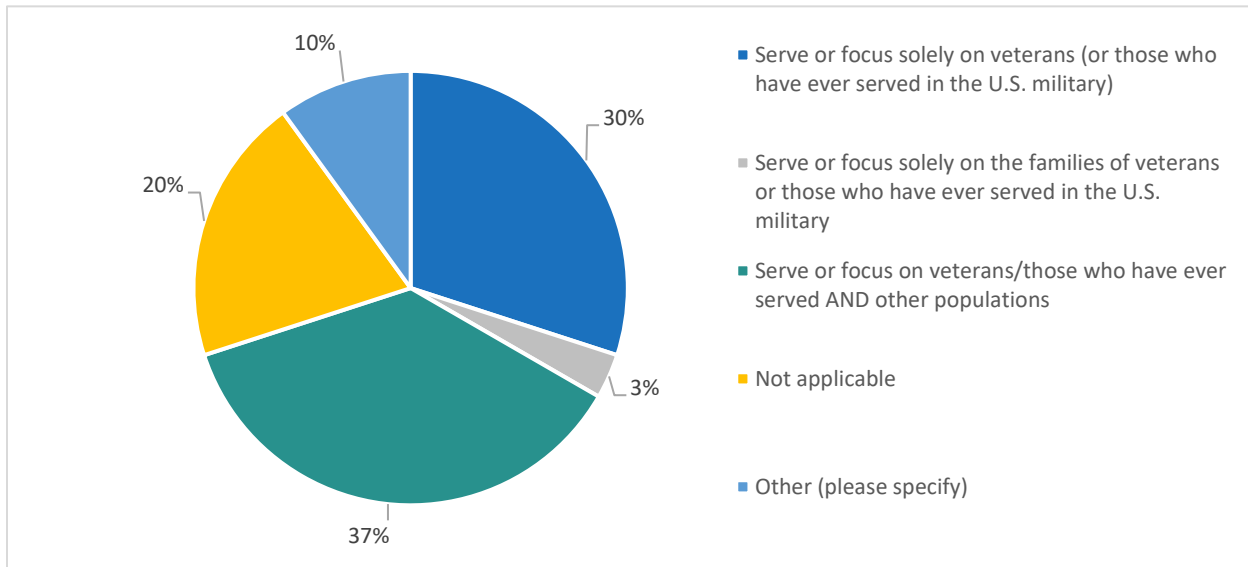
When asked, “Approximately how many veterans or veteran households do you serve per year?” service providers provided responses ranging from two to 4,200 veterans or veteran households. More than half of the providers who answered this question reported that they served more than 50 veterans each year, and four providers answered that the number of veterans they served was unknown.

Table 25: Does your organization do any of the following?

Answer Choices	Percent of Responses	Number of Responses
Serve or focus solely on veterans (or those who have ever served in the U.S. military)	40%	12
Serve or focus on veterans/those who have ever served AND other populations	30%	9
Other (please specify)	27%	8
Serve or focus solely on the families of veterans or those who have ever served in the U.S. military	3%	1
Serve or focus solely on active duty personnel	0%	0
Serve or focus solely on the families of active duty personnel	0%	0
Total	100%	30

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

Figure 40: Service Population



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

Service providers who responded to this survey reported most frequently serving veterans experiencing homelessness, justice involved veterans, female veterans, veteran families, veterans experiencing substance use disorder, and senior veterans. The provider respondents reported least serving veterans who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) and veterans newly separated from the military. While 11 respondents answered that they serve veteran families, no respondents answered that they focus solely on serving veteran families.

Table 26: Does your organization or program serve or focus on a specific population of veterans or those who have served in the military?

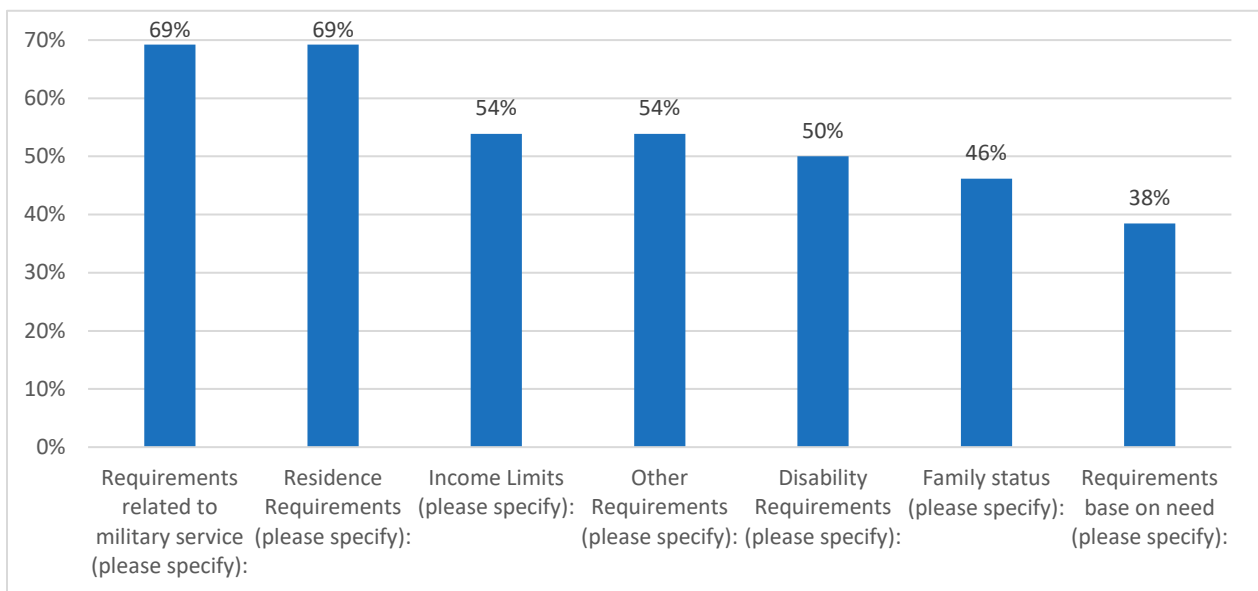
Answer Choices	Percent of Responses	Number of Responses
Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	50%	15
Justice Involved Veterans	40%	12
Female Veterans	37%	11
Veteran Families	37%	11
Veterans Experiencing Substance Use Disorder (SUD)	37%	11
Senior Veterans	37%	11
Low-Income Veterans	33%	10
Veterans Experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	27%	8

Veterans Experiencing Military Sexual Trauma (MST)	27%	8
Student Veterans	27%	8
LGBTQ+ Veterans	27%	8
Other (please specify)	27%	8
BIPOC Veterans	23%	7
Veterans Newly Separated from the Military	20%	6
Answered	100%	30

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

To qualify for services, more than half of the service providers answered that there are requirements related to military service and to residency. For providers who answered that “other” requirements applied, half answered that there were no requirements, a few answered “homeless status” was a requirement, one respondent answered that a mental health diagnosis was required, and another respondent answered that a referral from other agencies was required.

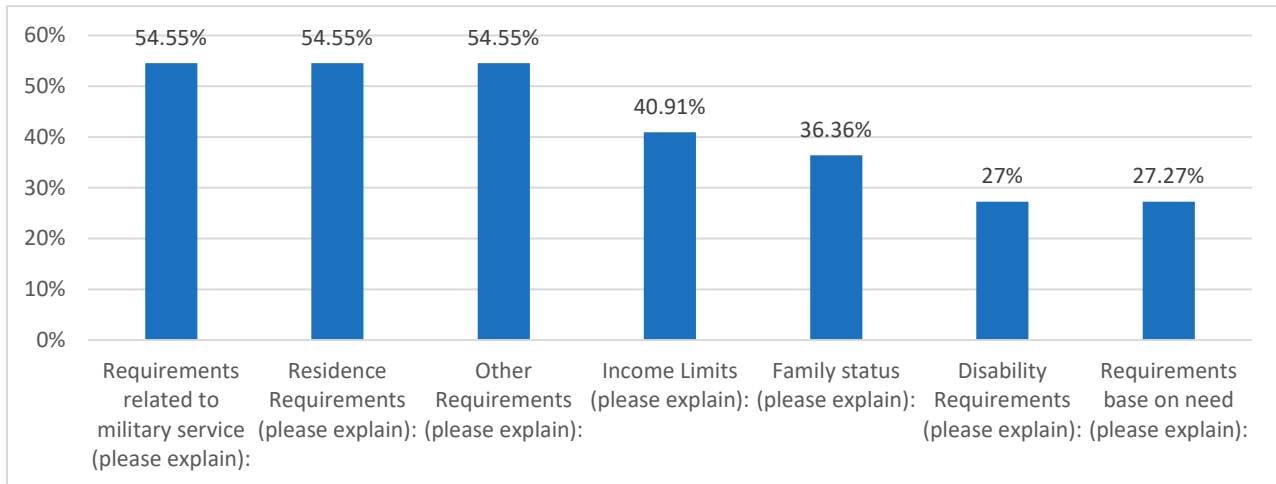
Figure 41: What are the eligibility requirements for your services or programs?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

When asked about the most common reasons that veterans or their families were determined ineligible for an organization’s services, respondents answered that ineligibility was most often related to military service and residency requirements. For the providers who noted “other” and provided an open-ended answer for this question, four indicated that this question was not applicable to their services, and others responded that applicants often did not have the correct referrals or submitted incomplete applications.

Figure 42: If veterans (including anyone who has ever served in the U.S. military) or their families are not eligible for your organization’s program’s services, what is the most frequent reason for their ineligibility?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

C. SERVICES PROVISION

When asked what services or activities the Veteran Service Provider Survey respondents provided, most answered that they provide “housing assistance” (53 percent) and “services for veterans experiencing homelessness” (50 percent). The other top responses for services and activities provided were employment assistance (40 percent), food and nutrition assistance (40 percent), and mental health services (40 percent). Compensation and pension assistance, women’s health services, and entrepreneurship services were the least provided services according to survey respondents. The open-ended “other (please specify)” responses included the following responses: reentry planning, senior services, donation of housewares, etc.

Table 27: What services or activities do you engage in or provide to the veteran population?

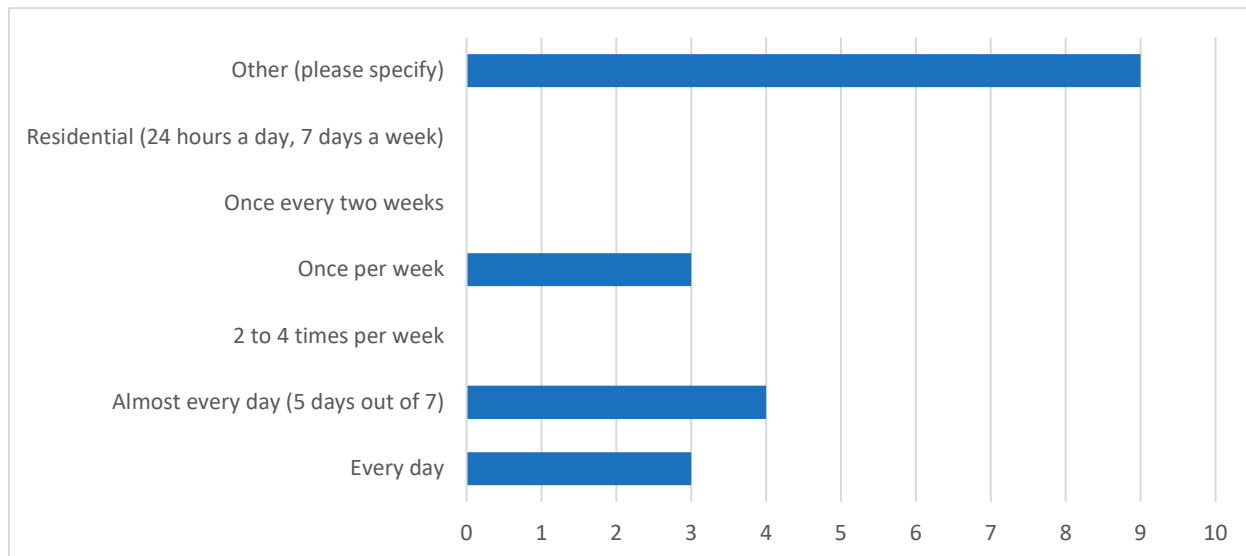
Answer Choices	Percent of Responses	Number of Responses
Housing Assistance	53%	16
Services for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	50%	15
Employment Assistance	40%	12
Food and Nutrition Assistance	40%	12

Mental Health Services	40%	12
Behavioral Health Services	37%	11
Advocacy	33%	10
Health Care	33%	10
Education/Workforce Training Assistance	30%	9
Senior services	23%	7
Other (please specify)	23%	7
Legal Services	20%	6
Military Family and Spouse Programs	17%	5
Disability Services	17%	5
Military Transition Services	17%	5
Compensation and Pension Assistance	13%	4
Women's Health Services	13%	4
Entrepreneurship Services	3%	1
Total responses	100%	30

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

When asked how frequently veterans received services, about 25 percent of the provider respondents answered that they served veteran clients every day or almost every day. The “other” open-ended answers provided by respondents to this question mostly stated that the care or services provided to veteran clients is determined on an individual or case-by-case basis.

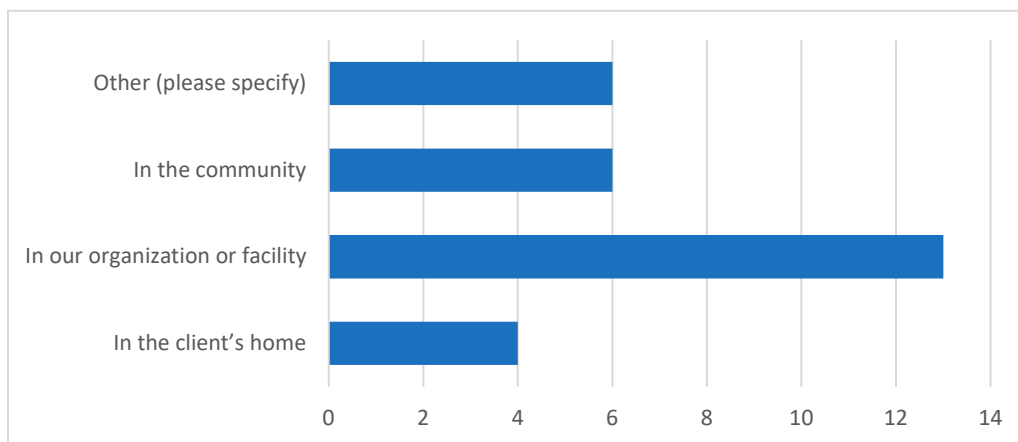
Figure 43: How frequently often do your veteran clients typically receive services from your organization?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

Survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that veterans normally receive services on-site in the organization or facility. On those that provided an open-ended “other” response, they indicated that clients receive services including through virtual, online meetings, and in community-based partner facilities as illustrated in Figure 43.

Figure 44: Where do veterans typically receive services from your organization?

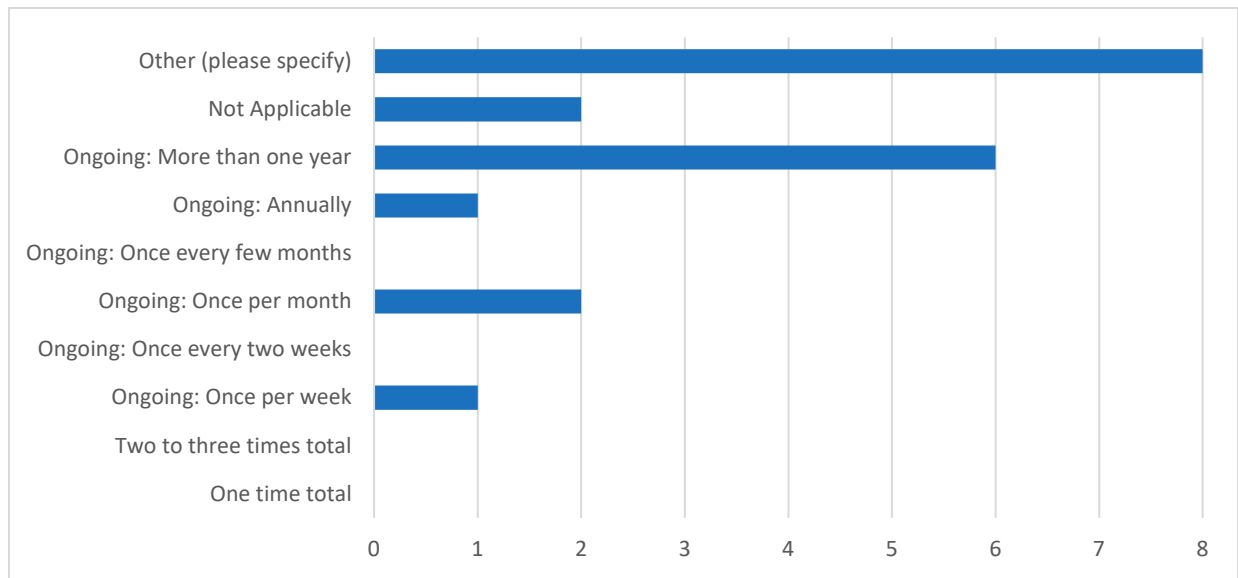


Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

47 percent of survey respondents indicated that veterans using their programs most utilized the program more than once a year. The answer with the most responses, however, was “other,” with 40 percent of respondents providing this response. Of the providers who provided narrative answers to the question

“How long do you typically serve individual veteran clients or veteran families (if applicable)?” 56 percent of providers indicated that the length of service was determined on an individual basis dependent on the veteran client’s needs. When asked “How does your organization determine if a veteran client has successfully completed services?”, 37 percent of respondents answered that services are completed when “identified goals are met” or “other.” The open-ended answers for the “other” responses include when veterans become stably housed, that health needs are ongoing and do not have a completion date, and that the completion is dependent on veteran needs and progress. Most survey respondents indicated that more than 50 percent of clients had successfully completed services. Those who answered “other” on this question mostly did so to ask for clarity around the question.

Figure 45: How long do you typically serve individual veteran clients or veteran families?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

Table 28: How does your organization determine if a veteran client has successfully completed services?

Answer Choices	Responses
Other (please specify)	10
Identified goals are met	7
Adequate participation for the scheduled amount of time	1
Written or oral surveys with clients	1

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

Table 29: How many veteran clients successfully complete services?

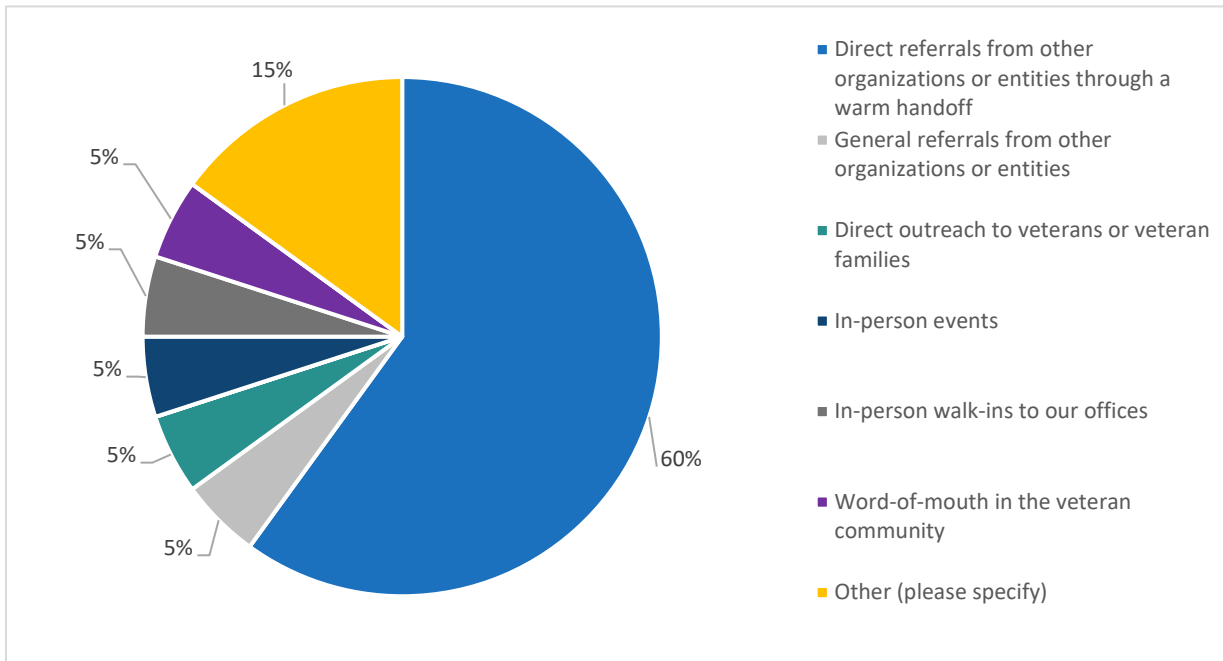
Answer Choices	Responses
More than 75%	7
Between 50% and 75%	4
Other (please specify)	7

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

D. OUTREACH

Veteran service providers who took this survey indicated that they thought that direct and general referrals were the most effective means of connecting to the veterans they served. The following open-ended survey question asked, “If you answered that you found direct outreach to veterans or print media an effective way of reaching veterans and their families...please share any additional detail regarding your best practices here.” Respondents primarily answered the open-ended question with strategies they use around outreach to referral sources, including engaging at VA facilities, educating veterans on other services that may be available, and working with the area’s homeless service providers.

Figure 46: What do you find is the most effective way of connecting with the veterans or the families that you serve?



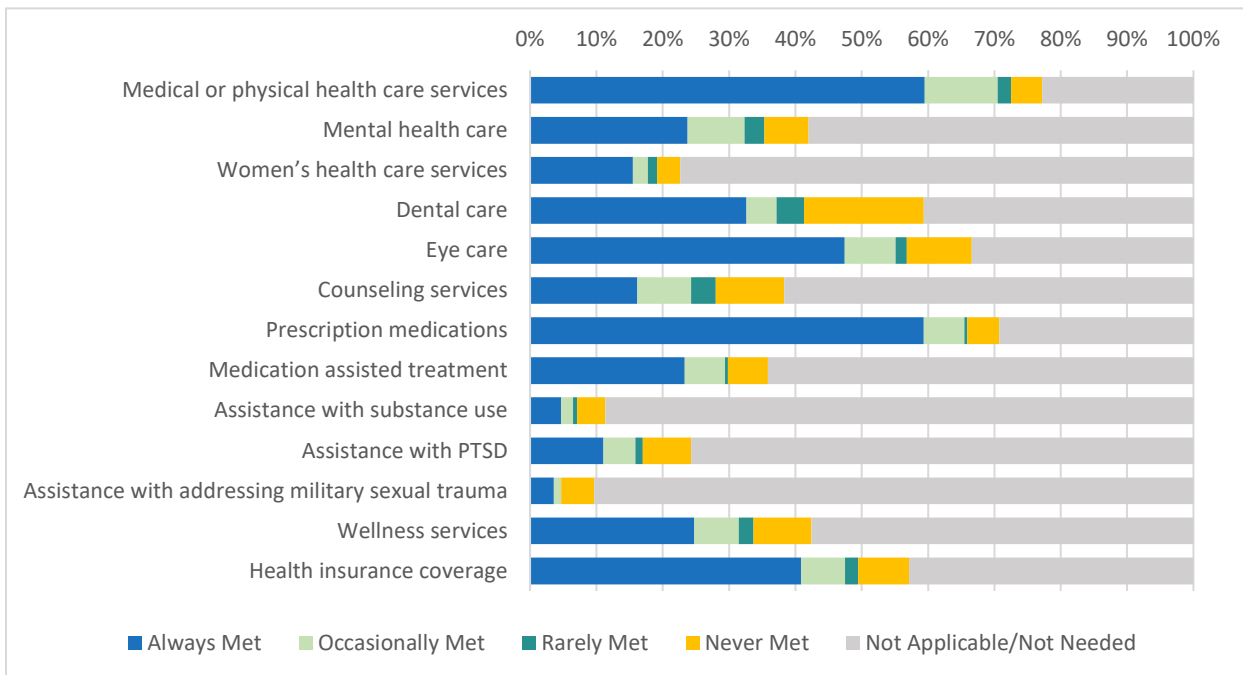
E. ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE PROVISION

A list of questions related to perception of service provision were asked on both the Veterans Needs Assessment and Veteran Service Provider Surveys to understand the differing perspectives between those offering services and those receiving services. Each question had a list of services and respondents could answer whether that need or service was “always met,” “occasionally met,” “rarely met,” “never met,” or “not applicable.”

i. HEALTH SERVICES

For the category of health services, service providers had an overall more positive view of service provision than veterans and those close to veterans. The only services that some service providers (6 percent) thought were “rarely met” needs were health insurance and dental care. A portion of veterans and those close to veterans, however, wrote that every service was a rarely or never met need. Veterans and those close to veterans had a more positive view of health insurance coverage, prescription medications, eye care, and dental care. Veterans and those close to veterans were much less likely than service providers to think assistance with addressing military sexual trauma, assistance with PTSD, and women’s health care were needs being met.

Figure 47: To what degree are each of these health care related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or who are veterans?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

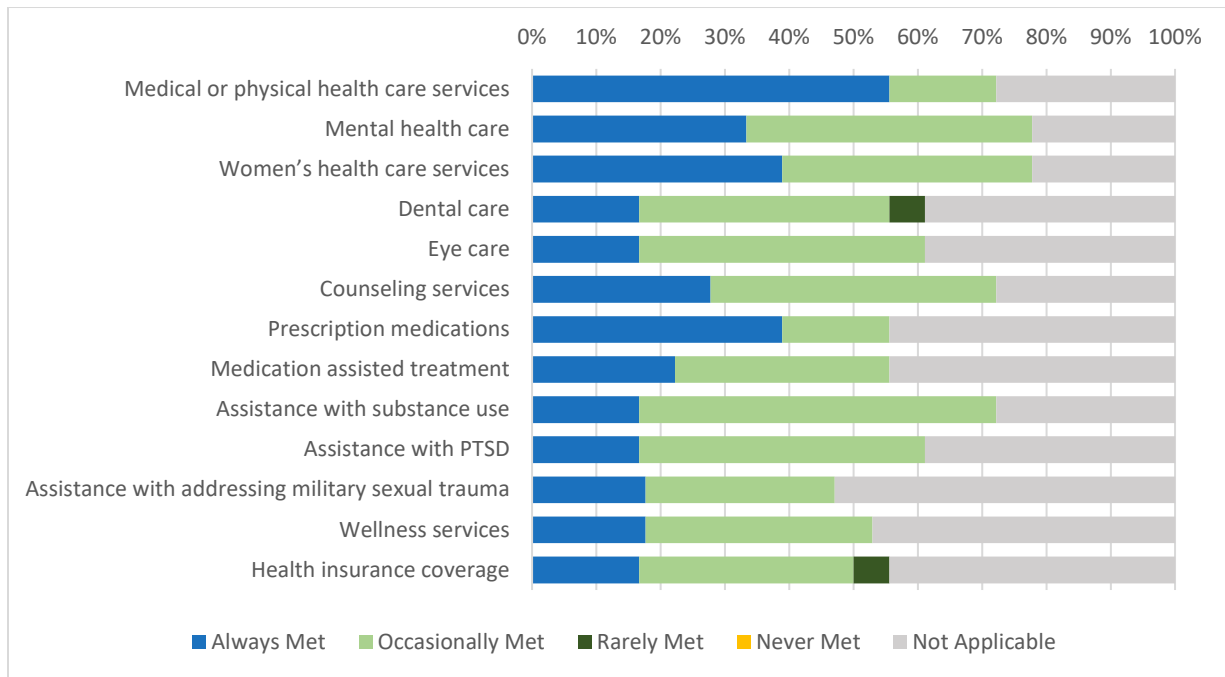
The data tables included below detail the degree to which respondents felt that specific health-related needs are met for veterans in San Mateo County.

Table 30: To what degree are each of these health care related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or who are veterans?

Services	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable/ Not Needed	Total Responses
Medical or physical health care services	59.5%	11.0%	2.0%	4.7%	22.8%	491
Mental health care	23.8%	8.6%	3.0%	6.6%	58.0%	467
Women’s health care services	15.5%	2.3%	1.4%	3.5%	77.4%	433
Dental care	32.6%	4.6%	4.1%	18.0%	40.7%	460
Eye care	47.5%	7.7%	1.7%	9.8%	33.4%	470
Counseling services	16.2%	8.1%	3.7%	10.3%	61.7%	457
Prescription medications	59.4%	6.1%	0.4%	4.8%	29.3%	475
Medication assisted treatment	23.3%	6.1%	0.5%	6.1%	64.1%	446
Assistance with substance use	4.7%	1.8%	0.7%	4.2%	88.6%	449
Assistance with PTSD	11.0%	4.9%	1.1%	7.3%	75.7%	453
Assistance with addressing military sexual trauma	3.6%	1.1%	0.0%	4.9%	90.4%	446
Wellness services	24.8%	6.7%	2.2%	8.7%	57.6%	448
Health insurance coverage	40.9%	6.6%	2.0%	7.7%	42.9%	455

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Figure 48: Which of these health care related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

Table 31: Which of these health care related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?

Answer Choices	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Medical or physical health care services	55.6%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	27.8%	18
Mental health care	33.3%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	18
Women's health care services	38.9%	38.9%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	18
Dental care	16.7%	38.9%	5.6%	0.0%	38.9%	18
Eye care	16.7%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	38.9%	18
Counseling services	27.8%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	27.8%	18
Prescription medications	38.9%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	44.4%	18
Medication assisted treatment	22.2%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	44.4%	18
Assistance with substance use	16.7%	55.6%	0.0%	0.0%	27.8%	18
Assistance with PTSD	16.7%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	38.9%	18
Assistance with addressing military sexual trauma	17.6%	29.4%	0.0%	0.0%	52.9%	17

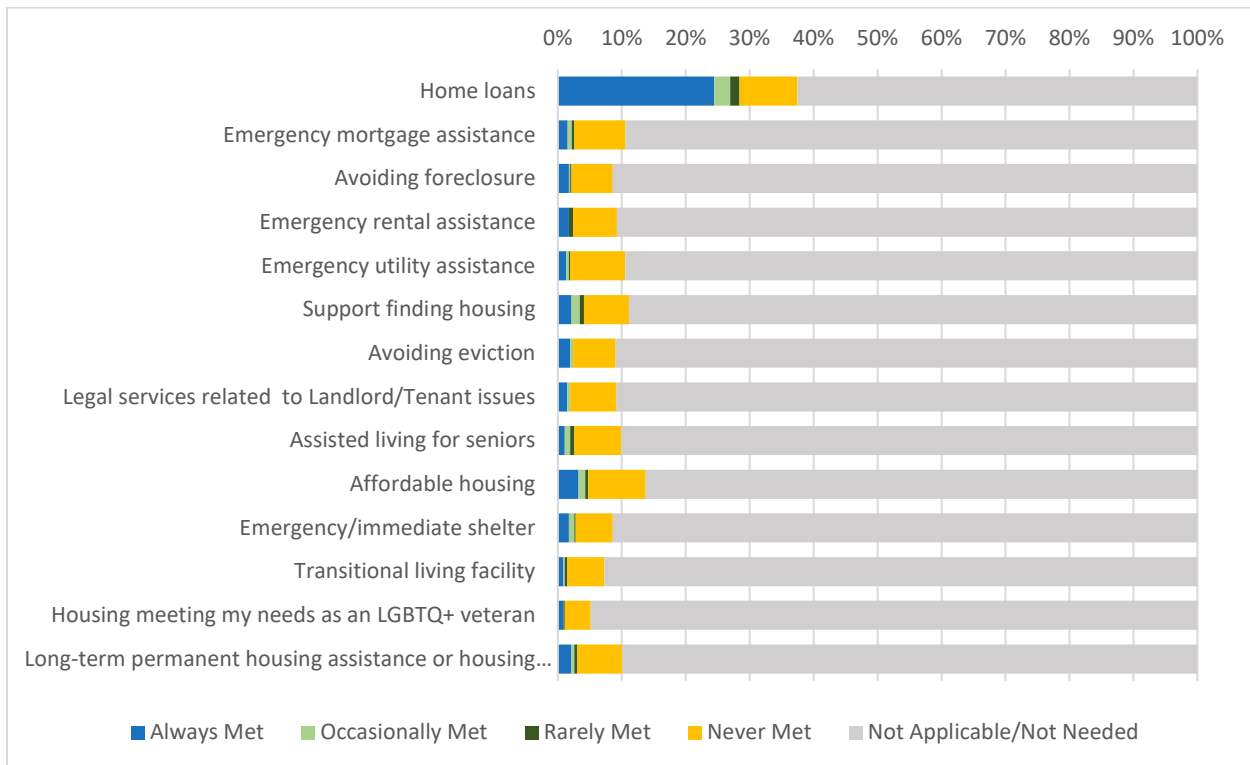
Wellness services	17.6%	35.3%	0.0%	0.0%	47.1%	17
Health insurance coverage	16.7%	33.3%	5.6%	0.0%	44.4%	18

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

i. HOUSING

With regard to housing needs, providers similarly had a more positive view of service provision than veterans and those close to veterans. However, veterans and those close to veterans were more likely to answer that their need for home loans was “always met” than services providers. Service providers thought avoiding foreclosure, emergency mortgage assistance, and assisted living for seniors were amongst the least met needs. Veterans and those close to veterans thought affordable housing and emergency utility assistance were among the least met needs.

Figure 49: To what degree are each of these housing related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or who are veterans?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

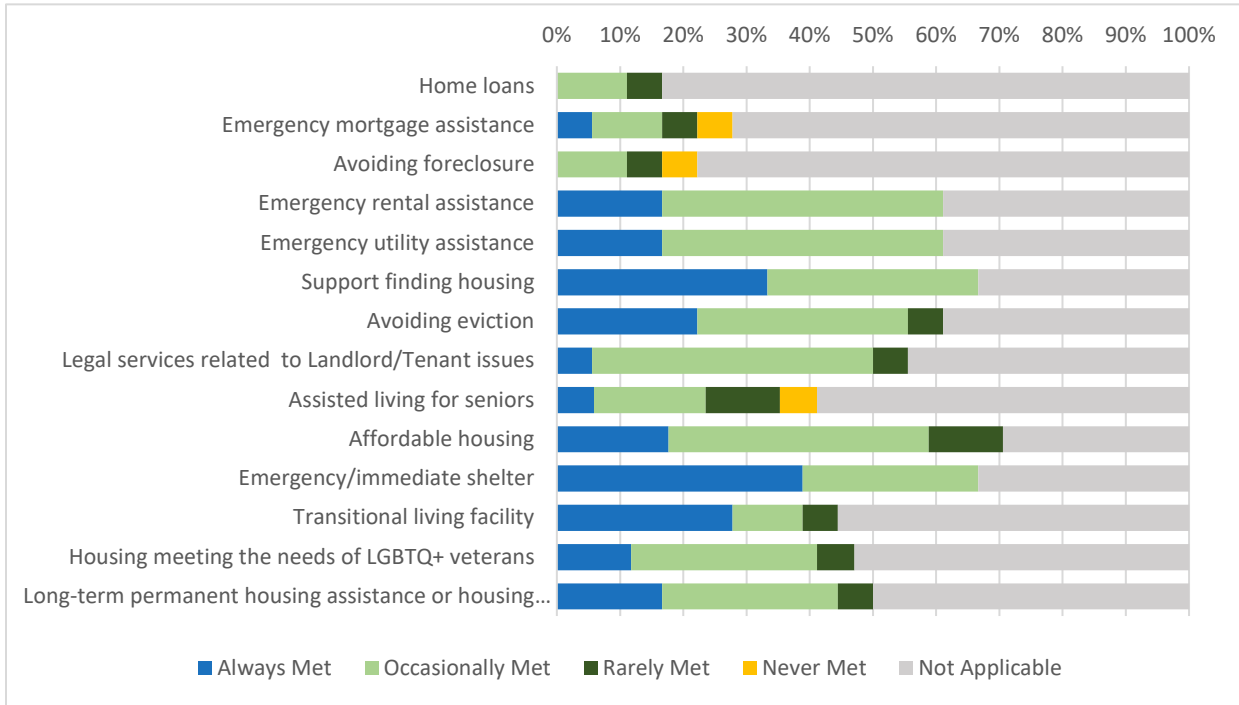
The data tables included below detail the degree to which respondents felt that specific housing-related needs are met for veterans in San Mateo County.

Table 32: To what degree are each of these housing related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or who are veterans?

Services	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable/ Not Needed	Total Responses
Home loans	24.4%	2.5%	1.5%	9.1%	62.5%	297
Emergency mortgage assistance	1.5%	0.7%	0.4%	8.0%	89.4%	414
Avoiding foreclosure	1.7%	0.2%	0.2%	6.4%	91.4%	427
Emergency rental assistance	1.7%	0.0%	0.6%	6.9%	90.8%	423
Emergency utility assistance	1.3%	0.4%	0.2%	8.6%	89.5%	417
Support finding housing	2.1%	1.3%	0.6%	7.1%	88.9%	416
Avoiding eviction	1.9%	0.4%	0.0%	6.7%	91.0%	423
Legal services related to Landlord/Tenant issues	1.5%	0.4%	0.0%	7.3%	90.8%	424
Assisted living for seniors	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%	7.3%	90.1%	418
Affordable housing	3.2%	1.1%	0.4%	9.0%	86.3%	402
Emergency/immediate shelter	1.7%	0.9%	0.2%	5.8%	91.4%	427
Transitional living facility	0.9%	0.2%	0.4%	5.8%	92.7%	433
Housing meeting my needs as an LGBTQ+ veteran	0.9%	0.0%	0.2%	4.1%	94.9%	442
Long-term permanent housing assistance or housing subsidies	2.2%	0.4%	0.4%	7.1%	89.9%	418

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Figure 50: Which of these housing related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

The data tables included below detail the degree to which service provider respondents felt that specific housing-related needs are met for veterans in San Mateo County.

Table 33: Which of these housing related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?

Answer Choices	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Home loans	0.0%	11.1%	5.6%	0.0%	83.3%	18
Emergency mortgage assistance	5.6%	11.1%	5.6%	5.6%	72.2%	18
Avoiding foreclosure	0.0%	11.1%	5.6%	5.6%	77.8%	18
Emergency rental assistance	16.7%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	38.9%	18
Emergency utility assistance	16.7%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	38.9%	18
Support finding housing	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	18
Avoiding eviction	22.2%	33.3%	5.6%	0.0%	38.9%	18
Legal services related to Landlord/Tenant issues	5.6%	44.4%	5.6%	0.0%	44.4%	18
Assisted living for seniors	5.9%	17.6%	11.8%	5.9%	58.8%	17
Affordable housing	17.6%	41.2%	11.8%	0.0%	29.4%	17

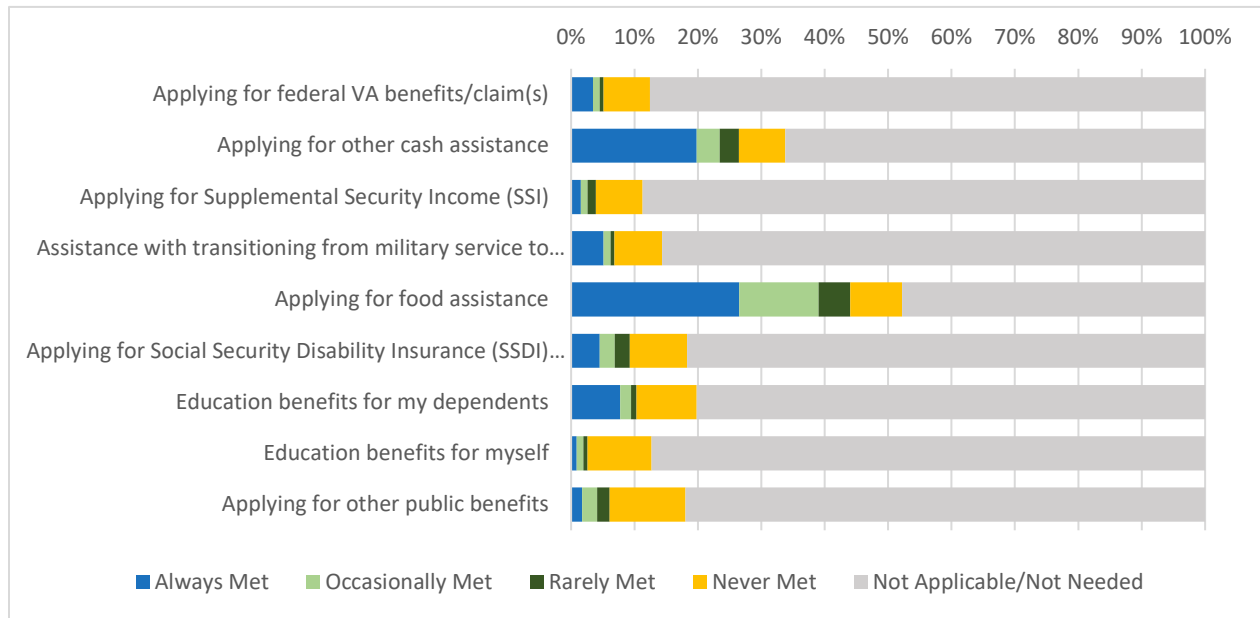
Emergency/immediate shelter	38.9%	27.8%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	18
Transitional living facility	27.8%	11.1%	5.6%	0.0%	55.6%	18
Housing meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ veterans	11.8%	29.4%	5.9%	0.0%	52.9%	17
Long-term permanent housing assistance or housing subsidies	16.7%	27.8%	5.6%	0.0%	50.0%	18

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

ii. BENEFIT RELATED NEEDS

When asked about benefit related needs, service providers had a more positive view of service provision with no service providers answering that the needs were “never met” but at least 7% of veterans and those close to veterans answering “never met” for every need. Both service providers and veterans and those close to veterans agreed that applying for food assistance and applying for cash assistance were amongst the most met needs. Veterans and those close to veterans and providers diverted most on applying for public benefits which veterans and those close to veterans were much more likely to answer was a never met need.

Figure 51: To what degree are each of these benefit needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

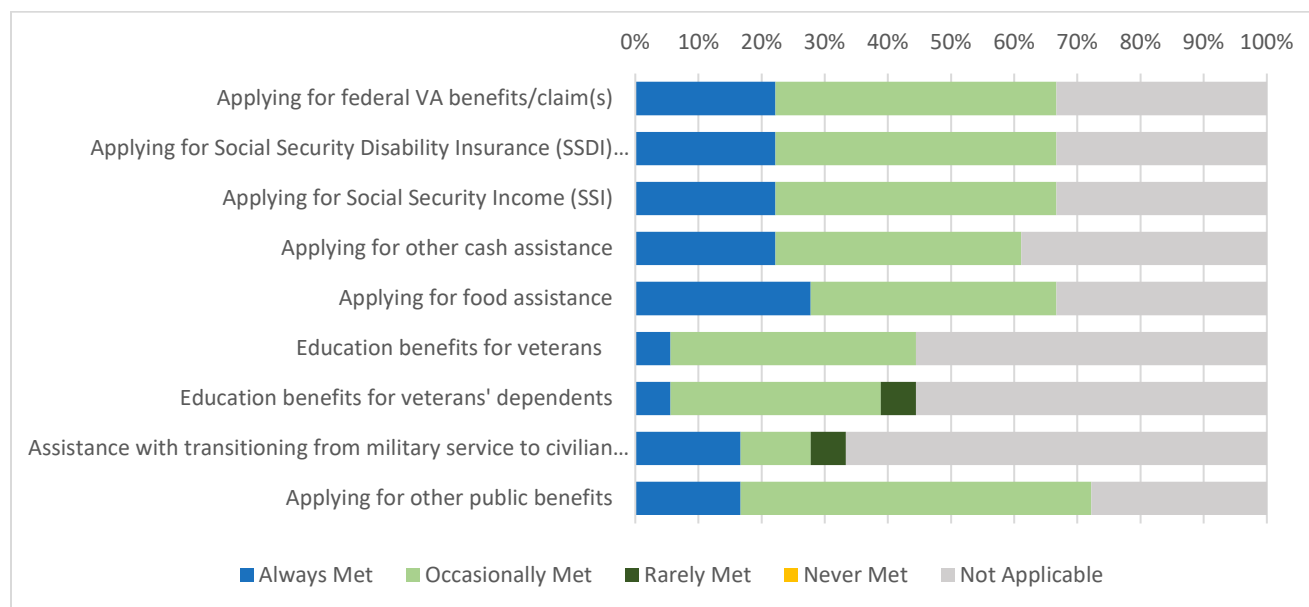
The data tables included below detail the degree to which respondents felt that specific benefit-related needs are met for veterans in San Mateo County.

Table 34: To what degree are each of these benefit needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans?

Services	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable/ Not Needed	Total Responses
Applying for federal VA benefits/claim(s)	26.5%	12.5%	5.0%	8.1%	47.8%	479
Applying for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits	5.1%	1.1%	0.6%	7.5%	85.7%	467
Applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	3.4%	1.1%	0.6%	7.3%	87.6%	467
Applying for other cash assistance	0.9%	1.1%	0.7%	10.1%	87.3%	465
Applying for food assistance	1.5%	1.1%	1.3%	7.4%	88.7%	462
Education benefits for MYSELF	19.8%	3.7%	3.0%	7.3%	66.2%	465
Education benefits for my DEPENDENTS	7.7%	1.7%	0.9%	9.5%	80.2%	465
Assistance with transitioning from military service to civilian life	4.5%	2.4%	2.4%	9.0%	81.7%	465
Applying for other public benefits	1.7%	2.4%	2.0%	12.0%	82.0%	460

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Figure 52: To what degree are each of these benefit needs, if any, met for the veterans you serve?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

The data tables included below detail the degree to which service provider respondents felt that specific benefit-related needs are met for veterans in San Mateo County.

Table 35: To what degree are each of these benefit needs, if any, met for the veterans you serve?

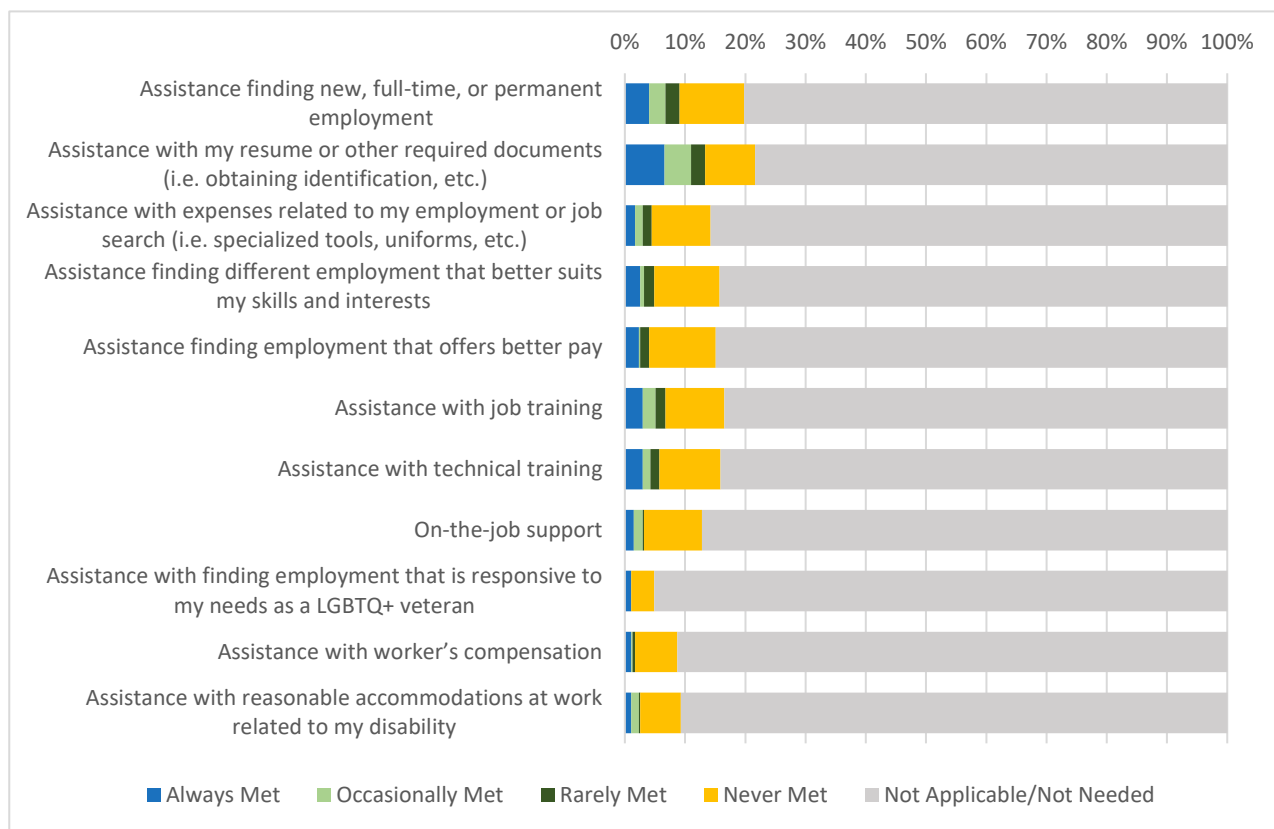
Answer Choices	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Applying for federal VA benefits/claim(s)	22.2%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	18
Applying for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits	22.2%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	18
Applying for Social Security Income (SSI)	22.2%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	18
Applying for other cash assistance	22.2%	38.9%	0.0%	0.0%	38.9%	18
Applying for food assistance	27.8%	38.9%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	18
Education benefits for veterans	5.6%	38.9%	0.0%	0.0%	55.6%	18
Education benefits for veterans' dependents	5.6%	33.3%	5.6%	0.0%	55.6%	18
Assistance with transitioning from military service to civilian life	16.7%	11.1%	5.6%	0.0%	66.7%	18
Applying for other public benefits	16.7%	55.6%	0.0%	0.0%	27.8%	18

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

iii. EMPLOYMENT NEED

When asked about benefit related needs, service providers had a more positive view of service provision than veterans and those close to veterans. For every service, more veterans and those closely connected to veterans answered that the service was never met than answered that the service was always met. Of note, veterans and those closely connected to veterans thought assistance finding employment that offers better pay, assistance finding different employment that better suits skills and interests, and assistance finding new, full-time, or permanent employment were the least met needs. This is echoed in the open choice responses in which veterans speak to the difficulty in working with career services in more non-traditional fields or fields that require degrees.

Figure 53: To what degree are each of these employment related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

The data tables included below detail the degree to which respondents felt that specific employment-related needs are met for veterans in San Mateo County.

Table 36: To what degree are each of these employment related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans?

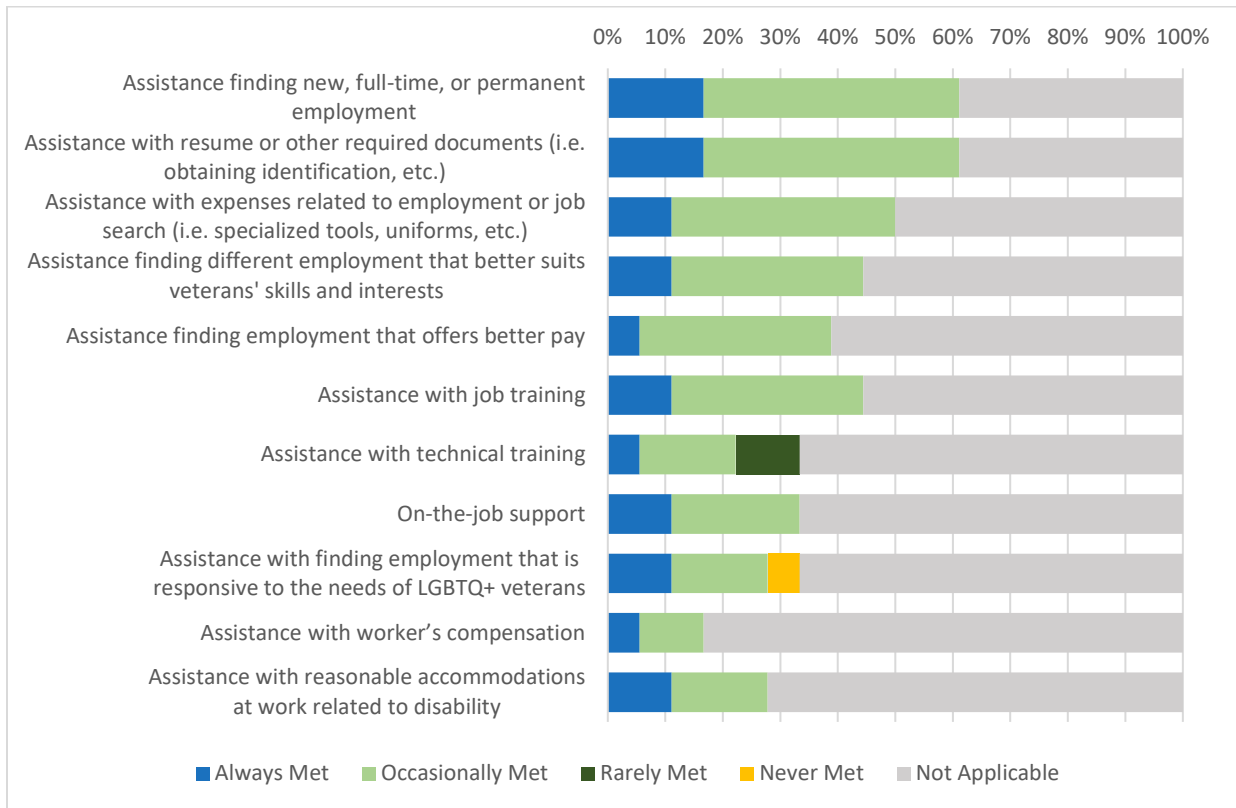
Answer Choices	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable/Not Needed	Total Responses
Assistance finding new, full-time, or permanent employment	4.0%	2.7%	2.3%	10.8%	80.2%	474
Assistance with my resume or other required documents (i.e. obtaining identification, etc.)	6.6%	4.5%	2.3%	8.3%	78.4%	472

Assistance with expenses related to my employment or job search (i.e. specialized tools, uniforms, etc.)	1.7%	1.3%	1.5%	9.8%	85.7%	470
Assistance finding different employment that better suits my skills and interests	2.6%	0.6%	1.7%	10.9%	84.3%	470
Assistance finding employment that offers better pay	2.3%	0.2%	1.5%	11.1%	84.9%	470
Assistance with job training	3.0%	2.1%	1.7%	9.7%	83.5%	473
Assistance with technical training	3.0%	1.3%	1.5%	10.2%	84.1%	472
On-the-job support	1.5%	1.5%	0.2%	9.6%	87.2%	468
Assistance with finding employment that is responsive to my needs as a LGBTQ+ veteran	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	95.1%	472
Assistance with worker's compensation	1.1%	0.2%	0.4%	7.0%	91.3%	472
Assistance with reasonable accommodations at work related to my disability	1.1%	1.3%	0.2%	6.8%	90.7%	473

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

The data tables and figures included below detail the degree to which service provider respondents felt that specific employment-related needs are met for veterans in San Mateo County.

Figure 54a: To what degree are each of these employment related needs, if any, met for the veterans you serve?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

Table 37: To what degree are each of these employment related needs, if any, met for the veterans you serve?

Answer Choices	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Assistance finding new, full-time, or permanent employment	16.7%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	38.9%	18
Assistance with resume or other required documents (i.e. obtaining identification, etc.)	16.7%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	38.9%	18
Assistance with expenses related to employment or job search (i.e. specialized tools, uniforms, etc.)	11.1%	38.9%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	18

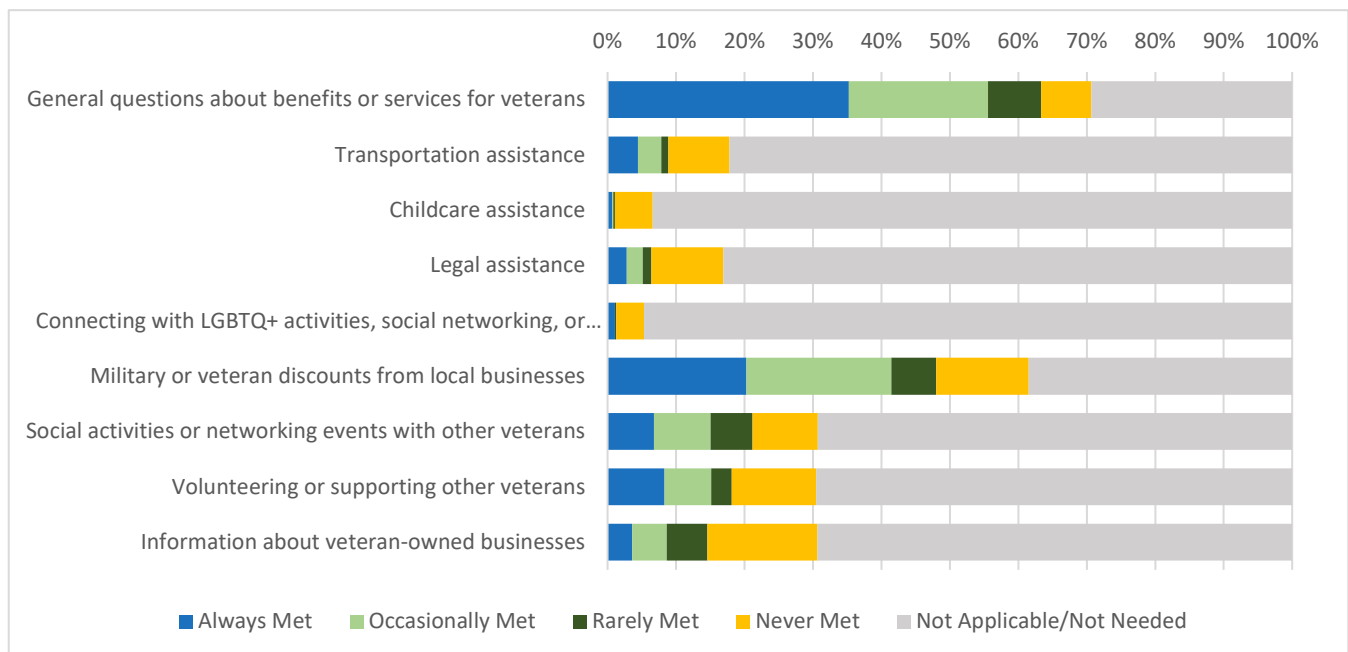
Assistance finding different employment that better suits veterans' skills and interests	11.1%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	55.6%	18
Assistance finding employment that offers better pay	5.6%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	61.1%	18
Assistance with job training	11.1%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	55.6%	18
Assistance with technical training	5.6%	16.7%	11.1%	0.0%	66.7%	18
On-the-job support	11.1%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	18
Assistance with finding employment that is responsive to the needs of LGBTQ+ veterans	11.1%	16.7%	0.0%	5.6%	66.7%	18
Assistance with worker's compensation	5.6%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	83.3%	18
Assistance with reasonable accommodations at work related to disability	11.1%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	72.2%	18

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

iv. OTHER UNMET NEEDS

When asked about other unmet needs, service providers had a more positive view of service provision than veterans and those close to veterans. The largest discrepancies were in connecting with LGBTQ+ activities, social networking, or support, childcare assistance, and transportation assistance.

Figure 54b: To what degree are each of these other needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

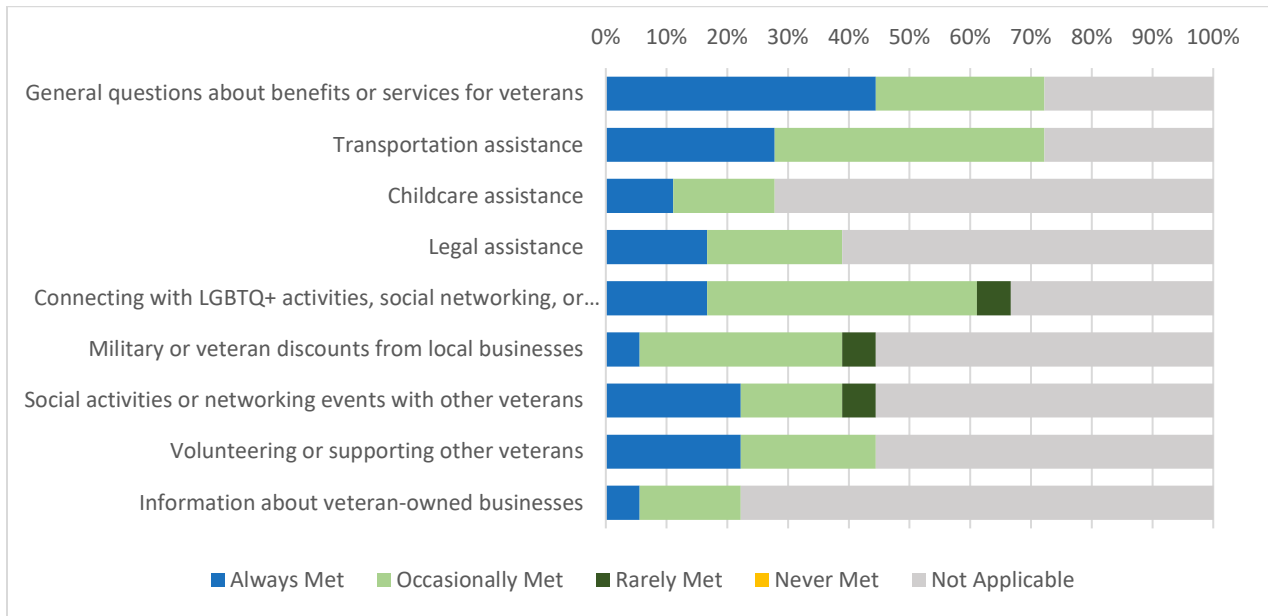
The data tables included below detail the degree to which respondents felt that other potential needs are met, or not, for veterans and their families in San Mateo County.

Table 38: To what degree are each of these other needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans?

Answer Choices	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Never Met	Not Applicable/ Not Needed	Total Responses
General questions about benefits or services for veterans	35.2%	20.3%	7.8%	7.3%	29.4%	477
Transportation assistance	4.5%	3.4%	1.1%	8.9%	82.2%	472
Childcare assistance	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	5.5%	93.4%	471
Legal assistance	2.8%	2.4%	1.3%	10.5%	83.1%	467
Connecting with LGBTQ+ activities, social networking, or support	1.1%	0.0%	0.2%	4.0%	94.7%	471
Military or veteran discounts from local businesses	20.3%	21.1%	6.6%	13.5%	38.5%	473
Social activities or networking events with other veterans	6.8%	8.3%	6.1%	9.5%	69.3%	472
Volunteering or supporting other veterans	8.3%	6.8%	3.0%	12.4%	69.5%	469
Information about veteran-owned businesses	3.6%	5.1%	5.9%	16.1%	69.3%	473

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Needs Assessment Survey

Figure 55: Which of these other related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

The data tables included below detail the degree to which respondents felt that other potential needs are met, or not, for veterans and their families in San Mateo County.

Table 39: Which of these other related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?

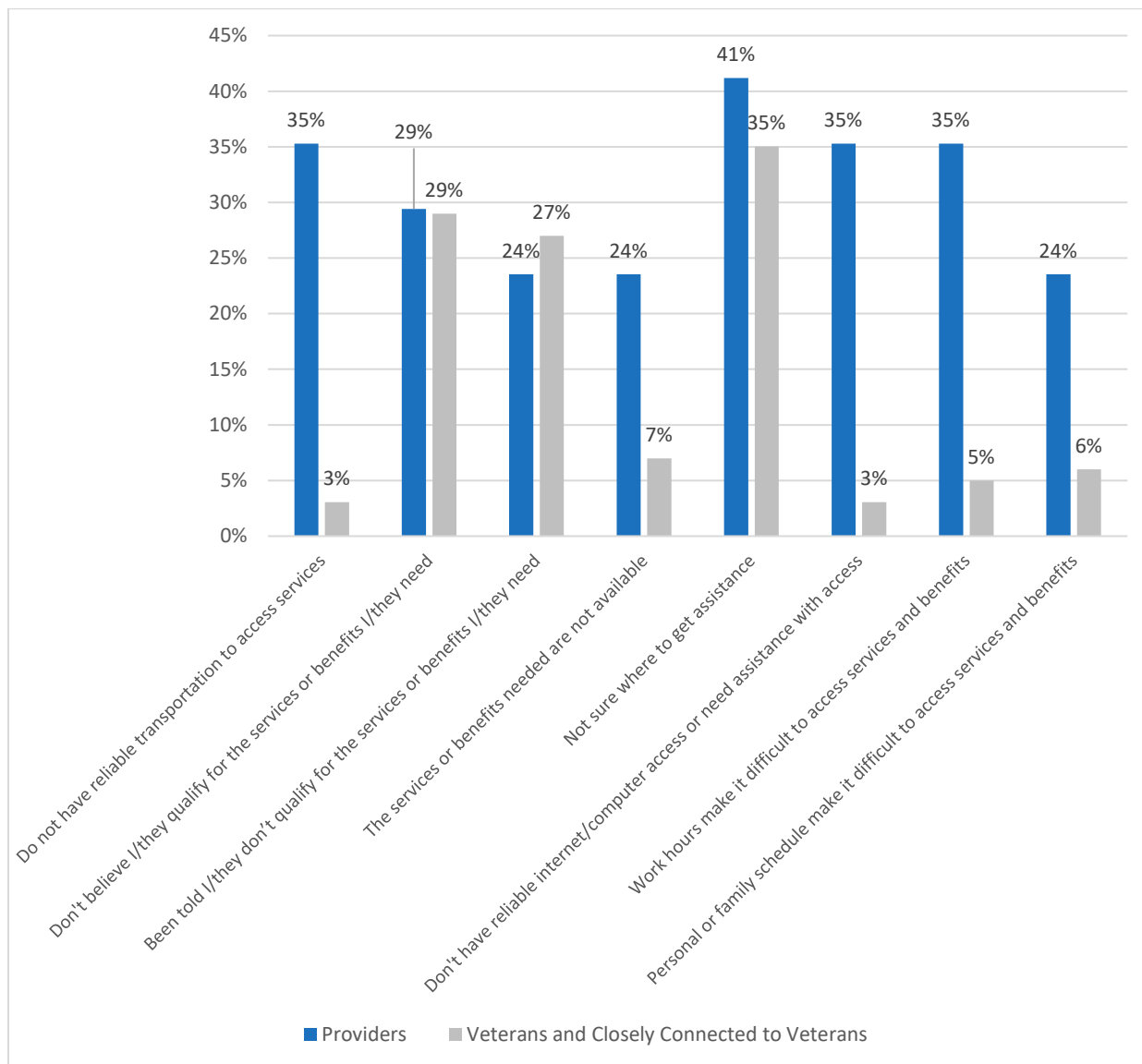
Answer Choices	Always Met	Occasionally Met	Rarely Met	Not Applicable	Never Met	Total Responses
General questions about benefits or services for veterans	44.4%	27.8%	0.0%	27.8%	0.0%	18
Transportation assistance	27.8%	44.4%	0.0%	27.8%	0.0%	18
Childcare assistance	11.1%	16.7%	0.0%	72.2%	0.0%	18
Legal assistance	16.7%	22.2%	0.0%	61.1%	0.0%	18
Connecting with LGBTQ+ activities, social networking, or support	16.7%	44.4%	5.6%	33.3%	0.0%	18
Military or veteran discounts from local businesses	5.6%	33.3%	5.6%	55.6%	0.0%	18
Social activities or networking events with other veterans	22.2%	16.7%	5.6%	55.6%	0.0%	18
Volunteering or supporting other veterans	22.2%	22.2%	0.0%	55.6%	0.0%	18
Information about veteran-owned businesses	5.6%	16.7%	0.0%	77.8%	0.0%	18

Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

v. BARRIERS TO SERVICE PROVISION

The next survey question asked both veterans and those closely connected to veterans and service providers the following: “If the needs of the veterans or veteran families are either partially met or not being met, please tell us why?” Respondents were provided the option to select multiple answers. Thirteen service providers answered this question and 274 veterans and those closely connected to veterans answered this question. Service providers answered every answer except “been told I/they don’t qualify for the services and or benefits I/they receive” at a higher percentage than veterans and those closely connected to veterans. While service providers answered that unreliable transportation, unreliable internet, and difficult work hours were substantial barriers, a small percent of veterans and closely connected to veterans answered that those factors were barriers in receiving services.

Figure 55: If the needs of the veterans or veteran families you serve are either partially met or not being met, please tell us why?



Source: 2021 San Mateo County Veteran Service Provider Survey

To understand the experience of service provision for veterans, the Veteran Needs Assessment Survey asks, “Is there anything else would you like us to know about the service needs, barriers to accessing services, or gaps in services experienced by you, as someone who has served in the U.S. military, or your family in San Mateo County?” About half of the answers were “no” or “N/A.” 15 percent of responses spoke to the outreach issues of services and confusion about which services they qualify for, who to contact, and what services are available. Respondents said they had a poor understanding of the benefits

available and “don’t know where to find a solution (for their) problems.” One respondent wrote that while they would be interested in benefits, they “didn’t want to burden the system” because they were not as high needs as other veterans may be. Another wrote,

“Veterans from my era have been estranged and rejected so often that we don’t believe the benefits apply to us. They never have before, why should they now?”

The respondents who spoke to outreach, most spoke to the need for sharing which resources are available and said:

- *“Please advise Veterans how the system really works to get the best care available”*
- *“Knowing these benefits are available to veterans and their families would help alleviate a ton of hardships and provide relief to those who don't know these benefits exist”*
- *“(We) did not know about these services, and as such never considered them”*
- *“We need help in finding out WHAT benefits we have and qualify for--medical, prescription, and medical devices. Also need help in knowing what all the benefits we are entitled to receive”*

Besides confusion over service eligibility and qualification, 6 percent of responses also indicated that there was challenges with communication once they did reach out to a service provider. This included not receiving a call back after leaving messages (three responses), “people keep sending you to different people and no one has the answers,” and long, multi-month delays once they have contacted someone.

Five percent of the answers for this question were positive. Some answers included feeling like the department contacted had their best interests in mind, appreciation to the CSVVO, appreciation for VA Palo Alto Health Care System’s mental health services, and positive experiences with receiving caregiving help for an elderly veteran parent.

The last question of the Veterans Needs Assessment Survey asks, “Is there anything else you would like to make sure we should know?” 77 percent of responses indicated that there was nothing to add. Almost 9 percent of the responses were positive indicating that they were grateful for the patience and assistance they had received. Similar to the question about services, 7 percent of the responses spoke to the need for more outreach to understand what services are available. Two responses indicated that they did not know all the services available to them until they took the survey. Other responses include two respondents who wanted to know more about volunteering opportunities. One respondent spoke to the difficulty of finding women to speak to at “the offices.” Two respondents spoke to programs for newly separated veterans, including barbeques and programs like Welcome Home. Three respondents spoke on negative past experiences including traumatic treatment after sexual assault, unempathetic mental health workers with a “suck it up mentality,” and inadequate mental health team response during mental health emergencies.

Similar to the veteran survey, the provider survey includes four open-ended questions to better understand service provision in San Mateo County. The first was “What else would you like us to know about the service needs of those who have served in the U.S. military or their families in San Mateo County?”. One respondent indicated that they wanted to know more about the demographics of the veterans they were serving, especially veteran age, and if the population of veterans was increasing or

decreasing. Two responses indicated that more outreach was needed for veteran services and that both the stigma and awareness of the services needed to be addressed. Other answers included:

- *“I would benefit from a general overview training to learn about the needs of veterans and their families in SMC. It will help us develop effective reentry plans, include all essential people, and focus if we can on services in custody that a needed by the veterans.”*
- *“Expensive to live around here and it's affecting our Veterans and their families who are trying to stay close to the VA.”*
- *“Veterans who are not service connected or did not serve for required time, how do they receive benefits or assistance or receive county support for PTSD or other services cant receive from VA.”*

Respondents were asked “What else would you like us to know about the barriers to accessing services in San Mateo County for those who have served in the U.S. military or their families?” Respondents provided answers indicating that outreach and veterans not being aware of the programs and benefits that they are eligible to receive are barriers to services. Another respondent agreed that, “Many do not feel they qualify due to their discharge status, and do not know that they can apply to upgrade.” One respondent discussed eligibility access and indicated that “increase in service-connected disability” rating was valuable. Other responses to this question included the following:

- *“Veterans who have not received eligibility to receive benefits or care from the VA have difficulty connecting and finding services needed through county due to not knowing resources and not having assistance to navigate through system.”*
- *“...in county requirements of 30 days to receive services in San Mateo County can cause barriers to newly homeless Veterans in San Mateo County. Access to all names on the San Mateo County Veteran by Name Lists will assist the VA in connecting to all Veterans in the county. Flexibility with Veteran and civilian beds would assist Veterans in gaining access to housing if the Veteran HCHV programs are full.”*
- *“In general, access to technology and ability to use it can be a barrier to some clients using our services at this time, but also to applying for affordable housing. We provide assistance over the phone as needed.”*

Respondents were asked, “What else would you like us to know about the gaps in services in San Mateo County for those who have served in the U.S. military or their families?” Respondents could provide open-ended narrative responses. Three respondents answered that housing and homelessness were currently pressing issues in San Mateo County and one of the largest current service gaps. They noted that affordable childcare and housing were issues, inquired as to what else the county is doing to support veteran housing, and suggested that there could be more of an effort to recognize/reward employers who employ homeless or formerly homeless Veterans. Another respondent referred to the collaboration of service providers in the county and noted:

- *“There is no one-stop shop to look for and apply for affordable housing. The County is developing a web portal called DAHLIA where people will be able to look for housing and apply for affordable housing. The County Veterans Service Office and the County Veterans Commission should be included in its development.”*

Respondents were asked, “Do you have any recommendations for improving the marketing of services and outreach to those who have ever served in the U.S. military in San Mateo County?” Respondent answers included the following:

- *“Partner with community-based organizations that serve veterans and their families who have trusted relationships with them, especially organizations that serve marginalized communities and offer services in languages other than English.”*
- *“Re-establish the outpost on VA Menlo Park to increase available outreach now that the programs on campus have re-started again.”*
- *“Yes. Do more marketing. Attend meetings in the community to learn what is out there.”*
- *“Flyers at Courthouses, bus stops, train [stations], food banks, shelters, and messages on billboards, advising Vets to contact VA or County Vet Offices to apply for discharge upgrades.”*
- *“Hand out informational cards, include URL, and phone numbers. Give informational talks at Legion and Auxiliary annual convention, booth at street fairs, wherever you're likely to come across a lot of foot traffic. The more people the more likely you'll encounter veterans. Like soccer, you score more points if you take more shots.”*
- *“Providing additional trainings and informational brochures and pamphlets to agencies supporting Vets. Include questions related to veteran status or service into questionnaires and assessments.”*
- *“Prior to diversion screening, a question should be asked by all providers if the person has ever served. Screening for length of stay in county and/or income prior to asking the Veteran question may inadvertently screen out eligible Veterans as the VA may have differing requirements for shelter beds with contract and grants.”*

3.0 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

As part of the San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study, Civix conducted six stakeholder interviews and three focus groups with separate sub-populations of veterans: Veterans who are Women, Veterans who are LGBTQ+, and Post 9/11 Veterans.

A. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Civix conducted six stakeholder interviews with individuals selected in consultation with the County of San Mateo’s Human Service Agency and County Veteran Service Office for their expertise and knowledge of the veteran community in San Mateo County. Stakeholder Interviews were completed between March and April 2021.

i. COUNTY OF SAN MATEO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES (BHRS)

The San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) Department has been a long-term partner with the County's court and probate system. Together, they run a pilot program to coordinate services and provide specialized Veterans Treatment and Military Courts that offer options for treatment and alternatives to incarceration. For BHRS's role, the County provided a three-year term case manager position, the Court Assistance Specialist. The Court Assistance Specialist for the Veterans Treatment Court program meets with veterans to complete a needs assessment, including an American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) assessment for substance use treatment, and provides case management. To conduct an ASAM, a substance use evaluation certification is required. The Court Assistance Specialist provides the treatment recommendations and plans to the court in order to provide the judge with treatment options for the case. The Court Assistance Specialist is then the ongoing case manager for the veteran or service member to ensure they complete the terms of the judgement. Through case management, the Court Assistance Specialist connects veterans to recovery groups, treatment readiness, transit to and from services, support with navigation of resources, coordinated care and emergency services, and links to food, clothing, and shelter.

Since the position was a three-year limited term position with the county, it expired in August 2020, though the program itself is permanent. Since that time, BHRS has worked with through other staffing positions to maintain the case management and assessment needed for the veterans and military courts and sought funding through the Mental Health Commission to support creation of a full-time permanent position. The availability of other positions for case management is temporary as a result of the pandemic shifting service priorities. Those staff will return to their regular roles when services resume operations, leaving a gap for the Court Assistance Specialist position in completing the needs assessment and evaluations for court recommendations for treatment and case management.

Many of those that are served through the Veterans Court are not eligible for VA services and are often not connected to County services, which means they have no support system for benefits or care needs that may be related to their service. Typically, each month brings one to two new veteran referrals to the Veterans Treatment Court, and three to four service member referrals to the Military Court. The average overall caseload is approximately 22 veterans and service members each month. Without the Court Assistance Specialist position, these referrals and cases would have no support, and without such support, as many as four to six veterans and service members will be left in custody each month instead of receiving treatment.

ii. COUNTY OF SAN MATEO AGING AND ADULT SERVICES (AAS)

Aging and Adult Services (AAS) is a division within San Mateo County Department of Health. AAS serves the general population, as well as veterans. Their services include in-home supportive services, linkages and care coordination), and referrals. Clients who are veterans identify their veteran status during intake with a AAS social worker. Depending on the veteran's Medi-Cal status, they may be eligible for in-home supportive services through AAS. Veterans who are in local area hospitals may be referred to AAS by a social worker or by first responders/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) who come to the home and identify someone in need of adult protective service. Around 6,000 individuals are currently receiving in-

home supportive services and hundreds are receiving other supportive services. AAS also works with community-based organizations like the Area Association on Aging and Legal Aid.

AAS operates a separate unit for financial abuse called the Elder Protection Team. The team works with the county District Attorney and law enforcement. AAS is aware of and has worked with several veterans who have been victims of financial scams – including a veteran who lost their home due to loan scam. The Elder Protection Team has been in place for 6 years and has been recognized federally for its work.

AAS's Public Guardian is a court authority who works with veterans to activate benefits through the VA and to verify service-connected need for veterans. The Public Administrator assists with connections to veteran burial benefits.

From the perspective of AAS, the most frequently identified need of veterans is caregiving in the home, particularly for non-service-connected veterans for who there are limited services available. Veteran clients with complex needs are the most difficult to address. When a veteran experiences multiple issues such as behavioral health issues, substance use, and family conflict it creates a significant challenge to keep person safe at home. It can be difficult to find a provider of in-home care in these situations. If the person is a veteran, AAS will connect with the VA to assess if there are any other services available through the VA that can address issues such as behavioral health.

Over the last five years, there has been an increase in homelessness in the area. Over the last three years more older adults, not just veterans, have reported that they're at risk of eviction. Oftentimes, they have exhausted their resources and the needs are greater than the resources they have.

One of the biggest challenges for AAS has been dealing older adults with few family connections to assist in meeting their care needs. In particular, the area has a high number of LGBT folks who might not have those family connections. There is also a struggle to provide affordable in-home care since the healthcare workforce needs outstrip the supply of workers.

AAS noted that improving outreach is one opportunity to better serve veterans in San Mateo County. Better outreach would enable AAS to educate veterans on adult protective services and financial abuse. Education on financial abuse is especially important for those veterans who may have sizable estates.

iii. **SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**

The Community College District Veterans Resource and Opportunity Centers (VROCs) have traditionally been a space for veteran students to gather, either informally between classes, to study, or for events and resources. Students who are veterans would often use the VROC as a home-base on each college campus. However, campuses have been closed for the past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and all interaction with students has been virtual. The VROC Directors shared that virtual spaces are harder to create and engage in. Keeping the sense of community with this group of students has been a challenge through the pandemic and many interactions have become one-on-one.

The VROC Directors have worked to adapt and reengage students through the virtual campus through sending care packages and making regular phone calls to students. However, the distance results in missing opportunities to coach or help that were often created when in person. Many of the veteran students that do reach out are already in crisis and seeking resources to address immediate or basic needs,

such as food, help with mortgage or rent payments, or childcare. Additionally, mental health has become an increased concern, as students are trying to navigate these needs within the pandemic with limited opportunity to be connected with services through the VROC. To help reach students virtually before they are in crisis, the Community College District has set up a Basic Needs Task Force that is looking at how to better connect with students and provide resources.

The pandemic has also created a new cohort of students - community members who have a change in employment due to the pandemic are returning to school to learn new skills or change fields. Coming back to school can have a huge impact on the individual and their household. The VROCs are trying to make sure to connect with these new students to provide support with the transition.

Because the community college district will continue virtually until Spring 2022 and students have access to all three “campuses,” the VROCs are collaborating to build a single online entry point/single experience for student veterans to interact with. They plan to create a virtual building where students feel more comfortable approaching the VROC coordinators. This single experience for the VROCs will increase opportunities to connect with students and provide more support beyond immediate needs. The VROCs are looking to develop more opportunities to partner with agencies and with the County to provide more career and workforce services, such as job placement and soft skill development, for current students and those returning to school for career changes. This single experience will also connect students to the SparkPoint Center to provide access to financial and other services to help build more security. The intent is to create more virtual spaces for meeting and skill building, as well as services, to rebuild the sense of community that veteran students experienced in the physical spaces on campus.

iv. PENINSULA VET CENTER

Peninsula Vet Center’s mission is to serve veterans: active duty, combat veterans, military sexual assault survivors, and those less than honorably discharged. Peninsula Vet Center has been in existence since the 1980’s. The counseling services they provide are free of charge to veterans and can continue indefinitely. They have long-standing relationships with the VA hospital to assist with client’s mental health needs. Peninsula Vet Center also works with non-profit organizations in the area to help assist veterans with housing needs and other services based on need. Swords to Plowshares is a partner to the Peninsula Vet Center and works with veterans who have been discharged or need legal assistance with status upgrades. Peninsula Vet Center also works closely with the San Mateo CVSO. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Peninsula Vet Center received more walk-ins and referrals from the county and state VA than they are currently receiving.

The Peninsula Vet Center sees about 200 clients annually. Each case worker has a caseload of 60 clients. The clients are predominately Vietnam-era vets. Needs related to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and substance use are the most frequently identified needs of veteran clients. These particular needs have been consistent over time.

Counseling is the most commonly requested service. Clients start with individual counseling and transition to group counseling. In addition to counseling services, Peninsula Vet Center also offers assistance with end of life planning including advanced directives, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits for spouses and dependents, VA burial benefits, and counseling specific to grieving and preparing the family. Given the cost of living in the San Francisco Bay Area, income and finances are difficult needs to address

particularly for those dealing with PTSD and for older veterans thinking about retirement and staying in the area. Jobs and housing are also needs regularly identified by Peninsula Vet Center clients.

From the Peninsula Vet Center's perspective, staffing and veteran outreach are two opportunities to improve service to veterans and their families. The Peninsula Vet Center has experienced challenges filling clinician staff roles, impacting the caseloads for the remaining staff. It is difficult for veterans and families to know the wrap around services. Peninsula Vet Center has an Outreach Specialist on site that collaborates with different local organizations and attends community events to let veterans know about the services available to them. Going forward, the Peninsula Vet Center would like to find additional ways to reach veterans, including through scheduling virtual sessions to improve access to services. They would also like to see more questions and screening at veteran serving organizations aimed at determining the mental health needs of veterans in San Mateo County.

v. VETERANS CURATION PROGRAM

The Veterans Curation Program (VCP) processes at-risk archaeological collections belonging to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and provides temporary employment to veterans. The primary goal of VCP is to give veterans an employment experience to help create a bridge from their military service to public sector employment.

VCP primarily serves post-9/11 veterans. The goal is to help newly separated veterans find employment. VCP trains newly separated veterans in building skills including teamwork, attention to detail, leadership skills, and other technical skills. Veterans typically participate in the program for approximately five months, receiving career counseling and mentorship. Leah Grant, Lab Manager, has been with VCP since 2018; the VCP is a new addition to San Mateo County.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, VCP would participate in job fairs and community events to recruit veteran participants. Now, their primary recruitment efforts are conducted via social media and through the San Mateo County CVSO. Ms. Grant reports that the program gets the most engagement from community college students through the colleges' veteran's services offices.

VCP shares that many veterans require financial training after their service; VCP plans to add services to better assist veterans in their financial literacy training. VCP also notes that access to mental health services is specifically critical for veterans who have PTSD or other mental health issues. Ms. Grant shares that there is a need for additional services, care coordination, and patient advocacy to help address the mental health needs of veterans.

In addition to lack of direct access to mental health professionals, VCP also shares some of the most significant challenges their organization faces, including a decrease in program applicants, conducting outreach to veterans, and difficulty securing permanent job placements for the veterans who participate in the program.

vi. LIFEMOVES

LifeMoves is the largest non-profit organization committed to ending the cycle of homelessness for families and individuals in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Their mission is to provide shelter and supportive services for those families and single adults who are experiencing homelessness, including a

focus on veterans and veteran families. LifeMoves offers intensive case management services, rental assistance, and moving assistance for those who may be at-risk for homelessness. LifeMoves also conducts outreach to veteran programs and organizations throughout Northern California to inform veterans regarding program openings.

LifeMoves Director of Shelter and Services for San Mateo County, Jacob Stone, currently oversees six emergency shelters. Mr. Stone reports that access to mental health professionals and permanent housing are some of the most common services requested by veterans. LifeMoves facilitates coordination to help veterans obtain appointments through the VA Medical Center or to connect them with other eligible health centers. LifeMoves also helps veterans apply for Section 8 vouchers and HUD-VASH, which is a program that provides a lifetime voucher where they receive intensive case management and other critical services.

LifeMoves reported the main challenges they experience in serving veterans are primarily around housing. Many of the shelter options offered by LifeMoves consist of communal living. In the past several years, LifeMoves reports that single adult veterans are no longer interested in living a communal-style shelter. To address this issue, LifeMoves coordinates with veterans to find adequate housing which sometimes results in moving them into hotels temporarily. As a result of the pandemic, LifeMoves has also seen an increase in the demand for housing and shelter for veterans with families. This has been particularly challenging because there is a time limited contract where families are unable to stay past the 6-month mark. During the pandemic, the length of stay in their program for veteran families has gone up dramatically, requiring approval of extensions from the funder, the VA, on a case-by-case basis.

B. FOCUS GROUPS

Three focus groups were conducted as part of the as part of the San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study. The focus groups focused on veterans who are women, veterans who are LGBTQ+ veterans, and veterans serving Post 9/11. On behalf of the County, Civix conducted outreach to various veteran serving organizations throughout San Mateo County to recruit focus group participants. Recruitment took place between February 2021 and April 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, outreach was conducted virtually which presented unique challenges reaching the targeted populations and a larger number of focus group participants. The challenges experienced with virtual focus group recruitment provided useful information with regard to the future of outreach activities and marketing for CVSO services, events, and activities. The virtual format and the nature of social engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic created unique challenges with regard to ensuring meaningful engagement of veterans and their families. The County will use the lessons learned in this process to examine and refine their approach to outreach and engagement. Focus Groups were conducted virtually between April 2021 and May 2021.

i. VETERANS WHO ARE WOMEN

The Women Veterans Focus Group Included 4 women veterans who served in the Army and Air Force. Several of the participants identified mental health as one of the greatest needs of veterans living, working, or attending school in San Mateo County. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the epidemic of suicide, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation were identified as some of the mental health issues

frequently seen in veterans. The participants all agreed that shame around mental health is one of the barriers veterans face in addressing their mental health needs. Another barrier identified was not knowing what services are available to them; this barrier was identified several times throughout the focus group.

Participants also identified seeking jobs and the transition from the military to civilian life as a challenge. One participant who works with veterans stated that the “military to civilian resume is a challenge.” Participants also noted a sense of community was lacking for veterans in the San Francisco Bay Area. One participant noted “people need to know there is a place you can go and somewhere you can ask [questions].”

One participant noted that the “active duty separation process owes more to veterans” and wondered how many veterans there are in San Mateo County and how best to reach them. Another noted, “getting people when they first leave [the military] is so important.” One participant also identified housing and homelessness as an issue for veterans in San Mateo County.

“I had no idea how to find out about which benefits I was eligible for until 7 years ago when I found myself without health insurance.”

– Focus Group Participant

All of the participants agreed that there were different needs for different veterans. There are “veterans who get out of the service and go work for tech and veterans facing homelessness.” One participant stated, “I always joke ‘where are the middle-class vets?’” The participant felt that the disparate backgrounds and communities of veterans makes it challenging to build community.

A participant shared, “I had no idea how to find out about which benefits I was eligible for until 7 years ago when I found myself without health insurance.” The participant recently began working with the San Mateo County Veteran Service Office (CVSO) and stated that “now that I know what CVSO does, it really helps. Not all of our vets live in San Mateo so not sure if they feel comfortable going.” Another participant stated that she was not aware of the CVSO and the services offered. All of the participants agreed that other veterans in their networks were unaware of the services available through CVSO, one participant noting that it was “critical to understand how CVSO fits into the system.”

All of the participants agreed that there should be additional outreach and engagement to the veterans in the area including educating organizations in the area about the services available to veterans. One idea suggested was creating an ambassador program to get volunteers who have used the systems to engage people and help network with training and to be a “welcome wagon,” for those veterans that have recently moved to the county. Another participant suggested creating a formal peer-to-peer mentorship program. All of the participants noted they would be willing to participate if these programs were created.

ii. VETERANS WHO ARE LGBTQ+

The LGBTQ+ Veterans Focus Group consisted of two separate interviews with veterans who served in the military and identified as LGBTQ+ or have had experience working with LGBTQ+ veterans. Participants agreed that common barriers among veterans include access to mental health services and lack of knowledge about what services are available to them. A participant shared, “A number of veterans don’t

have a clue that help is available out there, this is specifically true to families who experience a lot of financial issues and other health related issues.” Participants discussed ways to help increase awareness of the veteran services available in the community.

Participants shared that the County Veteran Service Office (CVSO) could improve marketing their services or creating stronger relationships with the LGBTQ+ and general veteran community. One participant shared that a way of building a relationship with veterans is by attending a wide variety of community events open to veterans and the general public. A participant shared, “Mailing is not effective; it is easy to lose what comes into the mailbox.” Participants also noted that there is a gap in communication among the various veterans’ services. Participants agreed that the CVSO could improve on their collaboration with non-profit organizations and other public sector agencies to help address the gap in collaboration and communication.

Another participant shared that, “a way to access veterans is through social media, whether it is...Facebook or Instagram.” Participants shared that the LGBTQ+ veteran community may be more accessible through public events. One participant shared that the “CVSO could attend the San Mateo County Pride Celebration events with a booth to let veterans know what services are available.”

“San Mateo County CVSO is very welcoming to me and my background. The VA treated me and my partner like a married couple and that made me feel welcomed.”

– Focus Group Participant

A focus group participant shared that, “In the past, when my dad -- a veteran who was very ill and needed healthcare and pension assistance -- the VA was great and the San Mateo County CVSO Officer was great in providing assistance with transportation. We felt very welcomed and supported.” The participant also shared that, the “San Mateo County CVSO is very welcoming to me and my background. The VA treated me and my partner like a married couple and that made me feel welcomed.”

iii. POST-SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 VETERANS

In an effort to engage with veterans who recently served in the period since September 11, 2001, outreach was conducted with the San Mateo County Community College District and local veterans’ membership groups. A stakeholder interview was conducted with a post-September 11, 2001 veteran engaged personally and professionally in San Mateo County with veterans and veteran services to gain qualitative insight into the services structure and perceived gaps in those services.

The participant shared that San Mateo County sometimes feels stuck being between San Francisco and Santa Clara Counties. Each bordering county has a larger geographical presence and larger service systems for veterans, including the two Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare systems. While having close access to two VA medical centers can make it easier to get care, the two systems do not always talk to each other or collaborate closely enough. Oftentimes, veterans report that they get frustrated not realizing that they have to do the work to re-register and transfer records from one VA healthcare system to the other. This creates a barrier to accessing services for those that do not have the time or resources to put in this extra work, especially for veterans experiencing homelessness and who are relying on the medical care offered by the VA.

San Mateo County also has its own unique geography, as it borders the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay, with a coastal mountain range running the length of the peninsula. The coastal areas along the Pacific Ocean are a collection of small towns that can be hard to reach and have limited availability of and access to services. The main access to the Pacific coast is through Highways 1 and 92, which are long, slow drives with limited public transit options. The interviewee pointed out that the County was doing outreach to these areas prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which included regularly scheduled onsite days and times at various county sites. The participant commented that veterans typically like the predictability of scheduled services and outreach, and that the standing onsite outreach time makes it easier to access services.

The interviewee observed that veterans in white collar or mid-level professional positions are the most difficult to get engaged in veterans' services. Because they have other resource options for health care or education, these veterans tend to have a mindset that "other veterans deserve it more" and generally do not seek out benefits from the VA or from the County. However, these veterans have earned benefits from their military service that may be useful for themselves or for their family, and they may not be aware of what is available to them. The participant shared that finding ways to engage this sub-population of veterans would not only help them access the benefits they are eligible for, but it could help improve the overall system of care and build awareness of available services. The participant noted that getting more veterans interested in benefits and services, including veterans more recently separated from the military, may also encourage some to become advocates themselves, get engaged with veterans' organizations, or to provide other volunteer time benefitting the veteran community.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.0 KEY VETERAN DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The updated Veteran Demographic Report revealed the following key demographic data and trends:

- San Mateo County’s total population has increased by 4.6 percent, while the veteran population has decreased by 16.1 percent according to 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
- The regional distribution of veterans within San Mateo County is primarily concentrated in North County and Mid-County, as 69.9 percent of San Mateo County’s estimated veteran population resides in these two regions.
- The largest proportion of San Mateo County veterans (34.1 percent) served in the Vietnam-era, a slightly higher percentage than in 2014 when 31.6 percent of veterans served during this time period.
- In San Mateo County, the veteran population is significantly older than the overall population. According to 2018 ACS 5-year Estimates, while only 19.5 percent of the non-veteran population are over the age of 65, 58.4 percent of the estimated veteran population are over age 65 and the average age of veterans is trending higher since 2014.
- The veteran population in San Mateo County is approximately 93.6 percent male and 6.4 percent female, however, an increasingly higher percentage of younger veterans are female.

2.0 KEY VETERAN NEEDS AND GAPS IN SERVICES

A. VETERANS NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY AND VETERAN SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY

Several themes emerged from both the service provider and communitywide veteran surveys. Both service providers and veterans agree that the greatest barrier to needs not being met was due to lack of awareness or clarity regarding what services are available and where to get assistance. Both groups agree that more outreach around which services are available and how to get connected is needed. Veterans indicated in their survey responses that they were confused about what services they could access and where to go or who to call to access services.

In open ended narrative answers, survey respondents indicated that when they did reach out, they were shuffled around or there was a long wait time to respond to voicemails or service requests. Providers similarly felt that the lack of knowledge of available services was the greatest barrier to veterans accessing services. 60 percent of providers also indicated that outreach was concentrated on direct referrals. If veterans are not already in the system through a referring agency or partner organization, it may be difficult to connected to the service. In open ended responses on the provider side, they indicated that there is little assistance available to help veterans navigate the system.

For outreach, there were many ideas included in the open-ended provider responses about creating more marketing materials, holding barbeques and events, partnering with local organizations, outreaching to

newly separated veterans, removing the stigma attached to seeking help, re-establishing the outpost in Menlo Park, and posting fliers around transit points.

The veteran survey also revealed many respondents who wanted to volunteer around connecting other veterans to services. There may be opportunity for a peer-to-peer network of volunteers that can spread information and create more community connection. Another potentially helpful outlet for outreach revealed in the surveys may be focusing more on those closely connected to veterans. One-third of all respondents who were closely connected to veterans but not veterans themselves had never heard of the CVSO.

On the section exploring both provider and veteran perception of services, providers were more optimistic about the ability to meet the needs of veterans than were veterans who responded to the Veterans Needs Assessment Survey. Veterans and service providers agreed that healthcare related needs were amongst the top “always met” needs, especially medical or physical health care services and prescription medicine. Veterans thought public benefits and employment related needs were amongst the least met needs. The difficulty with employment is echoed in the open choice responses in which veterans speak to the difficulty in working with career services in more non-traditional fields or fields that require degrees.

One of the goals of this report was to understand the need of veterans who identified as women and veterans who are LGBTQ+. The surveys found that veterans who identified as women were less sure where to receive assistance, 41 percent of veterans who identified as women versus 31 percent of veterans who identified as men. They were also less likely to use public benefits but more likely to receive services from the VA, mostly due to a higher percentage of veterans who identify as women respondents also being more likely to have a disability rating. Veterans who identify as men and veterans who prefer not to disclose gender were more likely to believe that they did not qualify for the services or benefits they needed, even though a smaller percent had been told they did not qualify.

LGBTQ+ veterans are likely underserved by the resources available. Although there were limited questions on LGBTQ+ identity due to the recent history of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policies, the surveys show that for the three LGBTQ+ specific resource questions, veterans who reply that their needs were “never met” are almost four times higher than veterans who reply that their needs were always met. The services included assistance finding employment, connecting with LGBTQ+ activities, social networking, or support, and housing needs as an LGBTQ+ veteran.

B. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Across the stakeholder interviews and focus groups, several themes emerged. Behavioral, mental and substance use issues are common needs to be addressed in serving the population. Organizations like County of San Mateo Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and Peninsula Vet Center are working to address these needs. However, one barrier to providing these services is staffing. Several of the stakeholders noted that there is a lack of staff support to handle their current caseload. Participants identified a greater need for outreach and engagement with the veteran population in San Mateo County. Those that were familiar with CVSO noted their positive experiences with getting information and connected to services. However, several participants noted within their networks there was not much awareness of CVSO and the services available through CVSO. The participants highlighted the need to

connect with veterans as they leave the service to make them area of the VA benefits available to them as well as CVSO services. Participants also noted a need increased collaboration among veteran services organizations and VA healthcare systems. The lack of collaboration creates a barrier accessing services.

3.0 BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES

Through activities conducted for the Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study, the following were identified as barriers to service access for veterans and their families in San Mateo County:

- Awareness of services and the ways to access them;
- Schedule and location of service availability;
- Navigating the system of services;
- Meeting eligibility and application guidelines;
- Transportation;
- Availability of women’s health services for female veterans;
- Availability of mental health services when needed;
- Lack of LGBTQ+ resources;
- Wait times for needed services;
- The stigma around accessing services; and
- Understanding of eligibility for services.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Through activities conducted for the Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study, the following were identified as recommendations for improving outreach, engagement, and service access for veterans and their families in San Mateo County:

- Strengthen peer-to-peer connections and opportunities for engagement to help information on services flow to the veterans who need it.
- Improve the accessibility of services by providing services in convenient locations where veterans are already at, focusing on areas of the county with the highest veteran concentrations, including North- and Mid-County
- Strengthen connections and partnerships across service providers and enhance warm handoffs between providers to improve system navigation for veterans and their families.
- Increase targeted outreach and marketing to veteran groups and peer-to-peer networks to improve information sharing, as well as to service providers
- Conduct increased CVSO outreach to veterans and those who are closely connected to veterans.
- Increase engagement with and across volunteer and veterans service organizations.

- Develop more community spaces for veterans as a way to engage with veterans, particularly newer veterans, those who are new to San Mateo County, and those who haven't engaged with veterans' services before.
- Frame outreach as a way of both connecting veterans to resources and also creating community, including volunteer opportunities.
- Create additional peer-to-peer engagement opportunities (i.e. through CVSO and Veterans Commission, etc.)
- Help managing veterans' expectations on the timeline for services and benefits, maintaining communication and engagement throughout the benefits process.

NEXT STEPS

In collaboration with the Veterans Commission, the County of San Mateo will use the information and analysis contained in this report to chart next steps for improving current outreach staffing, planning processes, and outreach and marketing to veterans and their families in San Mateo County. In addition to improving outreach to veterans and their families, the County will focus on strengthening collaboration across agencies, departments, providers, and organizations; creating opportunities for enhanced veteran engagement; and lowering barriers to service access.

1.0 STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION

The Human Service Agency and CVSO will take the following next steps to strengthen collaboration across agencies, departments, providers, and organizations to better serve the needs of veterans and their families in San Mateo County:

- Present the San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study Report to the County Veterans Commission.
- Convene stakeholders for a presentation on the findings of the San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study.
- Work collaboratively with all County departments to improve data collection efforts on veteran consumers, service needs, and program outcomes.
- Convene community providers and County departments to address veteran needs and systems planning.

2.0 IMPROVING OUTREACH AND LOWERING BARRIERS TO SERVICE ACCESS

The Human Service Agency and CVSO will take the following next steps to improve outreach and help lower barriers to accessing services in San Mateo County for veterans and their families:

- A marketing and outreach plan will be created in collaboration with the County Veterans Commission and community stakeholders.
- Current outreach staffing levels, roles, and responsibilities will be assessed to determine what staffing support is necessary to improve and strengthen CVSO outreach to veterans and their families.
- The CVSO will launch a new website for veteran services which provides the public with a user-friendly way to find the veteran-related services they may need. This website will be a tool for veterans, those close to veterans, and the general public alike. This tool offers the opportunity to help expand the reach of the CVSO beyond veterans to family members and those who may work with veterans but who are not familiar with the scope of CVSO's services.

3.0 ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

The Human Service Agency and CVSO will take the following next steps to enhance opportunities for engagement with veterans and their families:

- Assess past and present engagement activities and strategies as the pandemic wanes. Create improved opportunities for engagement as the health risks of the COVID-19 pandemic are mitigated.
- Assess present engagement activities geared towards older veterans, as the average age of veterans in San Mateo County continues to increase. Identify key opportunities for engaging older veterans, as well as veterans who are younger or newly separated from military service to ensure that their needs may be met early on.
- Assess present engagement activities geared towards veterans newly separated from service and identify key opportunities for engaging these veterans and educating them about the services available to them.
- Work collaboratively with each of the applicable County Commissions and VA to reach veterans who are women, LGBTQ+, older in age, or who are newly separated from military service and to tailor outreach and services to these sub-populations to promote better outcomes for these veterans and their families.

APPENDICES

1.0 METHODOLOGY

A. VETERAN NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1. Before we move on to the survey, please answer the following: Do you live or work in San Mateo County?

Answer Choices

- Yes, I live in San Mateo County
- Yes, I work or attend school in San Mateo County
- Yes, I live AND work or attend school in San Mateo County
- No, I do not live OR work in San Mateo County

Q2. Please let us know about your own or direct family connection to military service. Please check all that apply.

Answer Choices

- I am currently serving in the U.S. military
- I previously served in the U.S. military (for any length of time)
- I have a close family member (spouse, partner, child, parent, sibling) who is currently serving in the U.S. military
- I have a close family member (spouse, partner, child, parent, sibling) who previously served in the U.S. military
- I work/volunteer with a veteran service organization
- I am a member of a veteran organization
- I have a close connection with veterans
- None of the Above
- Other (please specify)

Q3. If you answered that you “have a close connect with veterans” to Question #12 above, please specify your relationship here: (open-ended answer)

Q4. If you served in the military, during which period(s) did you serve? Please check all that apply.

Answer Choices

- September 2001 or after
- August 1990 to August 2001 (includes Persian Gulf War)

- May 1975 to July 1990
- August 1964 to April 1975 (Vietnam Era)
- February 1955 to July 1964
- July 1950 to January 1955 (Korean War Era)
- January 1947 to June 1950
- December 1941 to December 1946 (World War II Era)
- Other (please specify)

Q5. What was your military discharge status?

Answer Choices

- Honorable discharge
- General discharge Under Honorable Conditions
- Other Than Honorable (OTH) discharge
- Bad Conduct discharge
- Dishonorable discharge
- Entry-level Separation
- Medical Separation
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

Q6. How familiar are you with the San Mateo County Veterans Services Office (CVSO)? Please check all that apply.

Answer Choices

- I have not heard of the CVSO
- I am somewhat familiar with the CVSO
- I know of the CVSO but haven't used CVSO services in San Mateo County
- I am familiar with and have used CVSO services in San Mateo County at some point in the past
- I am familiar with and currently have a case being worked by the CVSO in San Mateo County
- I am familiar with CVSOs in a county other than San Mateo.
- I am familiar with and have used CVSO services in a county other than San Mateo in the past.
- I am familiar with and currently have a case being worked by a CVSO in a county other than San Mateo.
- Other (please specify)

Q7. Which of these veteran organizations have you contacted at any time in the past five years? Please check all that apply.

Answer Choices

- County Veterans Service Office (CVSO)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Veterans Health Administration (VHA) (i.e. VA Medical Centers, Clinics, etc.)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): National Cemetery Administration
- State Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet)
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)
- American Legion
- AMVETS
- Nation's Finest (previously Veterans Resource Centers of America)
- LifeMoves
- I haven't connected with any of these organizations
- Other (please specify)

Q8. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Answer Choices

- Less than high school graduate
- High school graduate (includes equivalency)
- Some college or associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree or higher
- Other (please specify)

Q9. What is your current employment status?

Answer Choices

- Employed full-time, or on paid vacation or sick leave from full-time work
- Employed part-time, or on paid vacation or sick leave from part-time work
- Self-employed
- Not employed but looking for work
- Not employed and not looking for work
- Retired but employed part-time
- Retired and not employed
- Retired but looking for work
- Permanently or temporarily disabled but working full- or part-time

- Permanently or temporarily disabled and not working
- Permanently or temporarily disabled but looking for work
- Other (please specify)

Q10. Which of the following best describes your current housing status?

Answer Choices

- Rent my home
- Own my home
- Occupy place of residence with no payment of cash rent
- I stay with family or friends on a long-term basis
- I stay with family or friends on a temporary basis
- I stay in a medical or mental health facility
- I am currently without housing
- Temporary or Transitional Housing
- Other (please specify)

Q11. How long have you been at your current place of residence?

Answer Choices

- 1 year or less
- More than 1 year but less than 2 years
- More than 2 years but less than 5 years
- More than 5 years but less than 10 years
- More than 10 years but less than 20 years
- More than 20 years but less than 30 years
- More than 30 years but less than 40 years
- 40 years or more

Q12. What is your current zip code where you live or stay? (open-ended answer)

Q13. Which of the following VA Benefits do you or your immediate family members currently receive, if any? Please check all that apply.

Answer Choices

- VA Health Care

- VA Prescription Benefits
- VA Life Insurance (Veterans' Group Life Insurance/VGLI or Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance/SDVI)
- VA Home Loans
- VA Education and Training
- VA Vocational Rehabilitation
- VA Burial and Memorial Benefits
- VA Disability Compensation and Pension
- VA Benefits for Dependents and Survivors
- VA Transition Assistance
- None
- Other (please specify)

Q14. Which of the following public benefits do you currently receive, if any? Please check all that apply.

Answer Choices

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), including Pass through Child Support
- Social Security
- Unemployment insurance compensation
- Workers' compensation
- CalFresh
- Expedited CalFresh
- CalWORKS
- General Assistance
- Medi-Cal
- None
- Other (please specify)

Q15. To what degree are each of these health care related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or who are veterans?

Answer choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- Medical or physical health care services
- Mental health care
- Women's health care services
- Dental care

- Eye care
- Counseling services
- Prescription medications
- Medication assisted treatment
- Assistance with substance use
- Assistance with PTSD
- Assistance with addressing military sexual trauma
- Wellness services
- Health insurance coverage
- Other (please specify)

Q16. Are you or a member of your family currently covered by any of the following types of health insurance or health coverage?

Answer Choices

- VA health coverage
- CHAMPUS, CHAMPVA, or TRICARE (health care benefits for veterans and veteran families through the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs)
- Medicare
- Medicaid/Medical Assistance
- Some other federal/state/local government program
- Private insurance through a current or former employer or union
- Insurance purchased directly from an insurance company
- No health insurance
- Other (please specify)

Q17. In the past year, did you use VA health care services, or did you have any of your health care paid for by the VA?

Answer Choices

- Yes, I received services at the VA, or they were paid for by the VA
- No, I received services, not from the VA and were not paid for by the VA
- No, I did not receive any health care services
- Don't Know

Q18. To what degree are each of these housing related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or who are veterans?

Answer choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- Home loans
- Emergency mortgage assistance
- Avoiding foreclosure
- Emergency rental assistance
- Emergency utility assistance
- Support finding housing
- Avoiding eviction
- Legal services related to Landlord/Tenant issues
- Assisted living for seniors
- Affordable housing
- Emergency/immediate shelter
- Transitional living facility
- Housing meeting my needs as an LGBTQ+ veteran
- Long-term permanent housing assistance or housing subsidies
- Other (please specify)

Q19. To what degree are each of these benefit needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans?

Answer choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- Applying for federal VA benefits/claim(s)
- Applying for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits
- Applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Applying for other cash assistance
- Applying for food assistance
- Education benefits for MYSELF
- Education benefits for my DEPENDENTS
- Assistance with transitioning from military service to civilian life
- Applying for other public benefits
- Other Public Benefits (please specify)

Q20. To what degree are each of these employment related needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans?

Answer choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- Assistance finding new, full-time, or permanent employment
- Assistance with my resume or other required documents (i.e. obtaining identification, etc.)

- Assistance with expenses related to my employment or job search (i.e. specialized tools, uniforms, etc.)
- Assistance finding different employment that better suits my skills and interests
- Assistance finding employment that offers better pay
- Assistance with job training
- Assistance with technical training
- On-the-job support
- Assistance with finding employment that is responsive to my needs as a LGBTQ+ veteran
- Assistance with worker’s compensation
- Assistance with reasonable accommodations at work related to my disability

Q21. To what degree are each of these other needs, if any, met for you and/or your immediate family member(s) who have served in the U.S. military or are veterans?

Answer choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- General questions about benefits or services for veterans
- Transportation assistance
- Childcare assistance
- Legal assistance
- Connecting with LGBTQ+ activities, social networking, or support
- Military or veteran discounts from local businesses
- Social activities or networking events with other veterans
- Volunteering or supporting other veterans
- Information about veteran-owned businesses

Q22. If the needs noted in Questions #13 – 21 are either partially or not currently being met, please tell us what some of the top reasons are. Please check your top five reasons.

Answer Choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- I do not have reliable transportation to access services
- I don’t believe I qualify for the services or benefits I need
- I have been told I don’t qualify for the services or benefits I need
- The services or benefits I need are not available
- I’m not sure where to get assistance
- The services or benefits I need are not available
- I don’t have reliable internet/computer access or need assistance with access
- My work hours make it difficult to access services and benefits
- My personal or family schedule make it difficult to access services and benefits
- Other (please specify)

Q23. Is there anything else would you like us to know about the service needs, barriers to accessing services, or gaps in services experienced by you, as someone who has served in the U.S. military, or your family in San Mateo County? (open-ended answer)

Q24. What is your current gender identity?

Answer Choices

- Man
- Woman
- Genderqueer or genderfluid
- Non-binary
- Questioning or unsure
- Two-spirit
- Prefer not to disclose
- Additional or other gender category/identity not listed

Q25. Do you identify as transgender?

Answer Choices

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to disclose

Q26. What is your age?

Answer Choices

- 18 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 to 64 years
- 65 to 74 years
- 75 years and over

Q27. In what range is your current annual household income?

Answer Choices

- Less than \$10,000 or no income
- \$10,000 to \$14,999
- \$15,000 to \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$34,999
- \$35,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 or more

Q28. What is your race/ethnicity?

Answer Choices

- Black or African American
- Asian
- White
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Two or more races
- Some other race
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- White, not Hispanic or Latino

Q29. Which of the following best describes your marital and familial status?

Answer Choices

- Currently married
- Currently married with children
- Widowed
- Widowed with children
- Divorced
- Divorced with children
- Separated
- Separated with children
- Never married
- Never married with children

- Civil commitment or union
- Civil commitment or union with children
- Other (please specify)

Q30. Do you have a disability? If yes, are you receiving service-connected compensation and what is your service-related disability rating?

Answer Choices

- No
- Yes, 0 percent
- Yes, 10 to 20 percent
- Yes, 30 to 40 percent
- Yes, 50 to 60 percent
- Yes, 70 percent or higher
- Don't Know

Q31. If you are disabled but not receiving service-connected compensation, please tell us why. Please check all that apply.

Answer Choices

- I don't think I am eligible
- I have not applied
- I need assistance applying
- I don't know where to get assistance applying
- I have applied but was denied
- I have applied and my claim is pending
- I have applied and my appeal is pending
- I don't qualify
- Other
- Other (please specify)

Q32. Is there anything else you would like to make sure we should know? (open-ended answer)

Q33. Please share your email if you are interested in hearing more about local veteran resources and services. By including your email here, you may be placed on CSVO mailing lists for future bulletins. (open-ended answer)

Q34. Please list if there are any services or benefits you would specifically like to learn more about (i.e. county veterans services, state veterans benefits, community college programs, employment services, health services) (open-ended answer)

B. VETERAN SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1. What is the name of your organization or affiliation? (open-ended answer)

Q2. What kind of organization is it?

Answer Choices

- Non-profit organization
- Local government
- County government
- Federal government (other than VA)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- State Veterans Affairs (CalVet)
- Veteran service organization
- Veteran membership organization
- Other voluntary organization
- Other (please specify)

Q3. What is the name of your program (if applicable)? (open-ended answer)

Q4. In which county is your organization and/or program located?

Answer Choices

- Alameda
- Contra Costa
- Marin
- Napa
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Clara
- Solano
- A California County not listed above
- Multiple California counties
- Outside of California
- Statewide

- Nationwide
- International
- Don't Know

Q5. What is your level of familiarity with the County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) in San Mateo County?

Answer Choices

- I have not heard of the CVSO
- I am somewhat familiar with the CVSO
- I know of the CVSO but haven't used or connected Veterans with the services
- I am familiar with, and have used or connected Veterans with CVSO services at some point in the past
- I am familiar with, and currently have a case being worked by, the CVSO
- I regularly connect Veterans with the CVSO
- Other (please specify)

Q6. Which of these veterans' organizations have you contacted at any time? (Please check all that apply):

Answer Choices

- CVSO
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)
- American Legion
- AMVETS
- Peninsula Vet Center
- Nation's Finest (previously Veterans Resource Centers of America)
- San Mateo County Veterans Court
- I haven't connected with any of these organizations
- Other (please specify)

Q7. Does your organization do any of the following? (Please choose one):

Answer Choices

- Serve or focus solely on veterans (or those who have ever served in the U.S. military)
- Serve or focus solely on the families of veterans or those who have ever served in the U.S. military
- Serve or focus solely on active duty personnel
- Serve or focus solely on the families of active duty personnel
- Serve or focus on veterans/those who have ever served AND other populations
- Other (please specify)

Q8. If applicable, does your program (Please choose one):

Answer Choices

- Serve or focus solely on veterans (or those who have ever served in the U.S. military)
- Serve or focus solely on the families of veterans or those who have ever served in the U.S. military
- Serve or focus solely on active duty personnel
- Serve or focus solely on the families of active duty personnel
- Serve or focus on veterans/those who have ever served AND other populations
- Not applicable
- Other (please specify)

Q9. Does your organization or program serve or focus on a specific population of veterans or those who have served in the military? (Please check all that apply):

Answer Choices

- Female Veterans
- Veteran Families
- Veterans Experiencing Homelessness
- Veterans Experiencing Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
- Veterans Experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Veterans Experiencing Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- Justice Involved Veterans
- Veterans Newly Separated from the Military
- Student Veterans
- BIPOC Veterans
- Senior Veterans
- Low-Income Veterans
- LGBTQ+ Veterans

- Other (please specify)

Q10. What services or activities do you engage in or provide to the veteran population? (Please check all that apply):

Answer Choices

- Advocacy
- Housing Assistance
- Services for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness
- Employment Assistance
- Education/Workforce Training Assistance
- Entrepreneurship Services
- Military Family and Spouse Programs
- Compensation and Pension Assistance
- Food and Nutrition Assistance
- Legal Services
- Health Care
- Disability Services
- Military Transition Services
- Mental Health Services
- Behavioral Health Services
- Women's Health Services
- Senior services
- Other (please specify)

Q11. Approximately how many veterans or veteran households do you serve per year? (open-ended answer)

Q12. What are the eligibility requirements for your services or programs (if applicable)? Please indicate all that apply by providing a brief summary. (open-ended answers)

- Income Limits (please specify):
- Requirements related to military service (please specify):
- Residence Requirements (please specify):
- Disability Requirements (please specify):
- Requirements base on need (please specify):
- Family status (please specify):

- Other Requirements (please specify):

Q13. If veterans (including anyone who has ever served in the U.S. military) or their families are not eligible for your organization's program's services, what is the most frequent reason for their ineligibility? Please indicate all that apply by providing a brief explanation.

Answer Choices

- Income Limits (please explain):
- Requirements related to military service (please explain):
- Residence Requirements (please explain):
- Disability Requirements (please explain):
- Requirements base on need (please explain):
- Family status (please explain):
- Other Requirements (please explain):

Q14. What do you find is the most effective way of connecting with the veterans or the families that you serve? (Please choose one):

Answer Choices

- Direct referrals from other organizations or entities through a warm handoff
- General referrals from other organizations or entities
- Direct outreach to veterans or veteran families
- Website or other online or social media platforms
- Directly via email or other electronic mediums
- Print media
- In-person events
- In-person walk-ins to our offices
- Word-of-mouth in the veteran community
- Word-of-mouth in the community generally
- Other (please specify)

Q15. If you answered that you found direct outreach to veterans or print media an effective way of reaching veterans and their families in Question #14 above, please share any additional detail regarding your best practices here: (open-ended answer)

Q16. Where do veterans typically receive services from your organization? (Please check all that apply):

Answer Choices

- In the client's home
- In our organization or facility
- In the community
- Other (please specify)

Q17. How frequently often do your veteran clients typically receive services from your organization?

Answer Choices

- Every day
- Almost every day (5 days out of 7)
- 2 to 4 times per week
- Once per week
- Once every two weeks
- Residential (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Other (please specify)

Q18. How long do you typically serve individual veteran clients or veteran families (if applicable)?

Answer Choices

- One time total
- Two to three times total
- Ongoing: Once per week
- Ongoing: Once every two weeks
- Ongoing: Once per month
- Ongoing: Once every few months
- Ongoing: Annually
- Ongoing: More than one year
- Not Applicable
- Other (please specify)

Q19. How does your organization determine if a veteran client has successfully completed services?

Answer Choices

- Adequate participation for the scheduled amount of time
- Successful connection with veteran benefits

- Identified goals are met
- Written or oral surveys with clients
- Other (please specify)

Q20. How many veteran clients successfully complete services?

Answer Choices

- More than 75%
- Between 50% and 75%
- Between 25% and 50%
- Less than 25%
- Other (please specify)

Q21. How does your organization receive funding to provide veteran services? (Please check all that apply):

Answer Choices

- Municipality
- County
- State
- Federal
- Private
- Public-Private
- Other (please specify)

Q22. Please describe the top three challenges you face as an organization serving veterans and veteran families. (open-ended answers)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q23. Which of these health care related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?

Answer Choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- Medical or physical health care services

- Mental health care
- Women’s health care services
- Dental care
- Eye care
- Counseling services
- Prescription medications
- Medication assisted treatment
- Assistance with substance use
- Assistance with PTSD
- Assistance with addressing military sexual trauma
- Wellness services
- Health insurance coverage
- Other (please specify)

Q24. Which of these housing related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?

Answer Choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- Home loans
- Emergency mortgage assistance
- Avoiding foreclosure
- Emergency rental assistance
- Emergency utility assistance
- Support finding housing
- Avoiding eviction
- Legal services related to Landlord/Tenant issues
- Assisted living for seniors
- Affordable housing
- Emergency/immediate shelter
- Transitional living facility
- Housing meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ veterans
- Long-term permanent housing assistance or housing subsidies
- Other (please specify)

Q25. Which of these benefits related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?

Answer Choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- Applying for federal VA benefits/claim(s)

- Applying for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits
- Applying for Social Security Income (SSI)
- Applying for other cash assistance
- Applying for food assistance
- Education benefits for VETERANS
- Education benefits for VETERANS' DEPENDENTS
- Assistance with transitioning from military service to civilian life
- Applying for other public benefits
- Other (please specify)

Q26. Which of these employment related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?

Answer Choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- Assistance finding new, full-time, or permanent employment
- Assistance with resume or other required documents (i.e. obtaining identification, etc.)
- Assistance with expenses related to employment or job search (i.e. specialized tools, uniforms, etc.)
- Assistance finding different employment that better suits veterans' skills and interests
- Assistance finding employment that offers better pay
- Assistance with job training
- Assistance with technical training
- On-the-job support
- Assistance with finding employment that is responsive to the needs of LGBTQ+ veterans
- Assistance with worker's compensation
- Assistance with reasonable accommodations at work related to disability
- Other (please specify)

Q27. Which of these other related needs, if any, are met for the veterans you serve?

Answer Choices: Always Met, Occasionally Met, Rarely Met, Never Met, Not Applicable/Not Needed

- General questions about benefits or services for veterans
- Transportation assistance
- Childcare assistance
- Legal assistance
- Connecting with LGBTQ+ activities, social networking, or support
- Military or veteran discounts from local businesses
- Social activities or networking events with other veterans
- Volunteering or supporting other veterans

- Information about veteran-owned businesses
- Other (please specify)

Q28. If the needs of the veterans or veteran families you serve are either partially met or not being met, please tell us why? (Please check all that apply):

Answer Choices

- They do not have reliable transportation to access services
- They don't believe they qualify for the services or benefits they need
- They have been told they don't qualify for the services or benefits they need
- The services or benefits needed are not available
- They are not sure where to get assistance
- They don't have reliable internet/computer access or need assistance with access
- Their work hours make it difficult to access services and benefits
- Their personal or family schedule make it difficult to access services and benefits
- Other (please specify)

Q29. Do you coordinate with any of the following state, federal, or county veteran-serving organizations? (Please check all that apply):

Answer Choices

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office (such as the VHA Homeless Programs Office, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Center for Neighborhood and Faith Based Partnerships, or Office of Tribal Government Relations)
- Local VA Medical Center
- Local Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) regional office
- Local office of National Cemetery Administration (NCA)
- State Department of Veteran Services / Affairs (CalVet)
- State Women Veteran Coordinator
- County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO)
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

Q30. What else would you like us to know about the service needs of those who have served in the U.S. military or their families in San Mateo County? (open-ended answer)

Q31. What else would you like us to know about the barriers to accessing services in San Mateo County for those who have served in the U.S. military or their families? (open-ended answer)

Q32. What else would you like us to know about the gaps in services in San Mateo County for those who have served in the U.S. military or their families? (open-ended answer)

Q33. Do you have any recommendations for improving the marketing of services and outreach to those who have ever served in the U.S. military in San Mateo County? (open-ended answer)

C. FOCUS GROUP FRAMEWORK

i. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND FORMAT

As part of the San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment and Outreach Study, Civix conducted three focus groups on behalf of the County of San Mateo which focused on three separate sub-populations of veterans: Veterans who are Women, Veterans who are LGBTQ+, and Post 9/11 Veterans. Veterans participated in a discussion that centered around veterans' service needs, and access to services. Focus Groups were conducted virtually between April and May 2021.

The questions that guided these focus groups are included below:

1. From your perspective, what are some of greatest needs of veterans living, working, or attending school in San Mateo County? Are there particular services you feel you most need?
2. How well do you feel these needs are being met?
3. What are some of the barriers you feel veterans and their families face in accessing services or getting their needs met in San Mateo County?
4. What are some ways you feel these barriers should be addressed?
5. Have you ever used the services offered by the San Mateo County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) services or referred other veterans to them?
6. Are you or other veterans in your network aware of the services that are available through the San Mateo County Veterans Service Office (CVSO)?
7. What are some of the methods you feel work best to reach veterans and their families in San Mateo County?
8. What are some of the methods you feel do not work in reaching veterans and their families in San Mateo County?
9. Do you have specific ideas for improving outreach veterans to help them access the services that may be available to them?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

D. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK

i. STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

Alan Yaghoubi, Clinical Services Manager, Special Projects, Mental Health Services, <i>San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services</i>	Gina Ciardella Palmer, VROC Director, <i>Skyline College</i>
Adolfo Leiva, SparkPoint Center Director, <i>Canada College</i>	Leah Grant, Lab Manager, <i>Veterans Curation Program</i>
Rosa Moncada, VROC Coordinator, <i>Canada College</i>	Amy Alderman, Director, <i>Peninsula Vet Center</i>
Luis Padilla, VROC Director, <i>College of San Mateo</i>	Jacob Stone, Director, <i>LifeMoves</i>
Chris Rodriguez, Deputy Director, <i>San Mateo Aging and Adult Services</i>	

ii. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In coordination with the County of San Mateo's Human Service Agency and County Veteran Service Office, Civix identified a diverse group of stakeholders for to be interviewed individually regarding veterans needs and access to services. Stakeholder Interviews were completed between March and April 2021.

The questions that guided these 30 to 60-minute stakeholder interview sessions were:

1. Please describe your organization's role/mission as well as your role within the organization. Does your organization serve the general population, focus on veterans, or focus on a specific sub-population of veterans?
2. How do veterans, defined as anyone who has ever served in the U.S. military, find and use your services or engage with your organization? (I.e., referrals, walk ins, appointments, etc.)
3. In your experience, what are the greatest or most frequently identified needs of veterans?
 - a. What are the most common services requested?
 - b. What are the most difficult needs to address? Why?
4. How have veterans' needs changed over the last 5 years? Over the last year?
5. What other challenges or barriers to accessing services do you see veterans facing across San Mateo County?
6. What are the biggest challenges your organization faces in serving veterans and their families?
7. What are the opportunities you see for your organization in better serving veterans and their families?
8. Does your organization currently work with the County Veteran Service Office (CVSO) or other veteran service providers or organizations?

9. Are the veterans you work with aware of the CVS0 and the services it offers? If not, why and do you have recommendations for how best CVS0 can reach veterans? How do you hope information gained from the needs assessment will be helpful to your work with veterans?

2.0 GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
AAS	Aging and Adult Services
AMVETS	American Veterans
ASAM	American Society of Addiction Medicine
BHRS	Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
CalTAP	California Transition Assistance Program
CalVet	California Department of Veterans Affairs
CoC	Continuum of Care
CES	Coordinated Entry System
CSVO	County Veterans Service Officers
DAV	Disabled American Veterans
HSA	San Mateo County Human Services Agency
HCHV	Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program
HCV	Housing Choice Voucher
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
HUD-VASH	The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer or Questioning
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
SUD	Substance Use Disorder
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VAPAHCs	Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System
VASFMC	Veterans Affairs San Francisco Medical Center
VAMC	VA Medical Center
VBA	Veterans Benefit Administration
VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars
VHA	Veterans Health Administration

VROC	Veterans Resource and Opportunity Center
VTC	Veterans Treatment Court
VVA	Vietnam Veterans of America