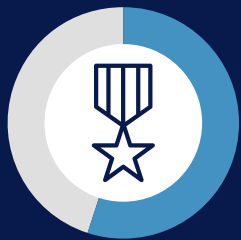


PENNSYLVANIA VETERANS SOCIAL SECURITY & SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

INTRODUCTION

For 90 years, Social Security has been the foundation of economic security for retired and disabled Americans and their families, including veterans. Social Security is part of the contract our government made with everyone in the workforce, including those who served in the military. Under the Trump administration, cuts to Social Security's staffing, local offices and, most surprisingly, funding are threatening to break that contract. Pennsylvania's veterans worked hard for this country and earned their Social Security benefits. To honor their sacrifice, we must protect Social Security.



MORE THAN HALF (55%) OF
PENNSYLVANIA VETERANS
RELY ON SOCIAL SECURITY.

PRODUCED BY:



GROUNDING FACTS:

Pennsylvania's Veterans Rely on Social Security

About 657,000 veterans live in Pennsylvania. When they signed up to serve, the earned benefit of Social Security was part of their contract with the U.S. government.

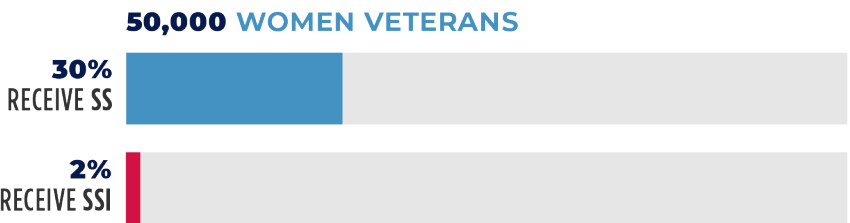
More Than Half of Pennsylvania Veterans Receive Social Security

Fifty-five percent of Pennsylvania veterans – 360,600 vets – receive income from Social Security, such as retirement benefits or disability benefits. About 18,200 veterans receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which supports low-income people with disabilities.



One in 13 Pennsylvania Veterans Are Women

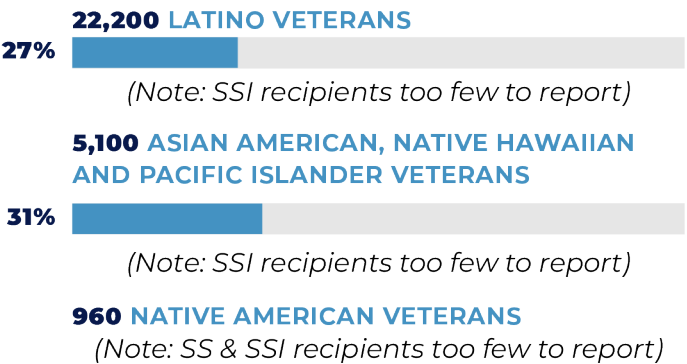
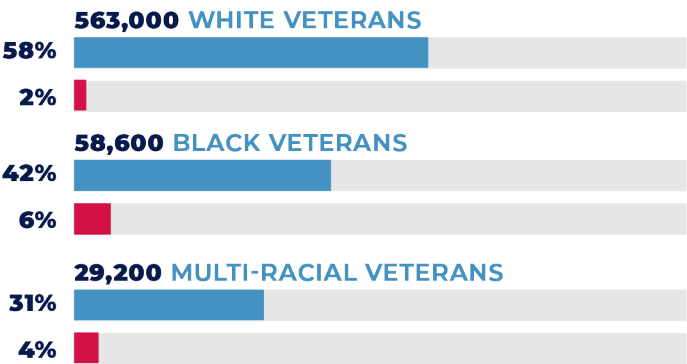
Nearly 50,000 of Pennsylvania's veterans are women – one in 13 Pennsylvania veterans – with 30 percent receiving Social Security income.



CONTEXT: Social Security and SSI are especially important for women, who tend to be paid less over a lifetime due to time spent out of the workforce for caregiving, discrimination and other factors.¹

Social Security Is a Promise to All Veterans

Pennsylvania's veterans are diverse, and Social Security is important to veterans in every racial/ethnic group.



CONTEXT: For generations, military service has represented an important pathway toward fair treatment, opportunity and belonging for communities of color that faced discrimination in many other careers.² Today's military and veterans are increasingly diverse.³

Even Before Retirement Age, Veterans Depend on Social Security

39 percent of Pennsylvania's veterans are under the age of 62 (the youngest age someone can start claiming Social Security retirement benefits). Veterans under 62 are nearly twice as likely as non-veterans under 62 to receive income from Social Security, such as Disability Insurance or survivor benefits (5.4% compared to 3.0%). Veterans under 62 make up one-third of all veterans who receive SSI (31 percent).



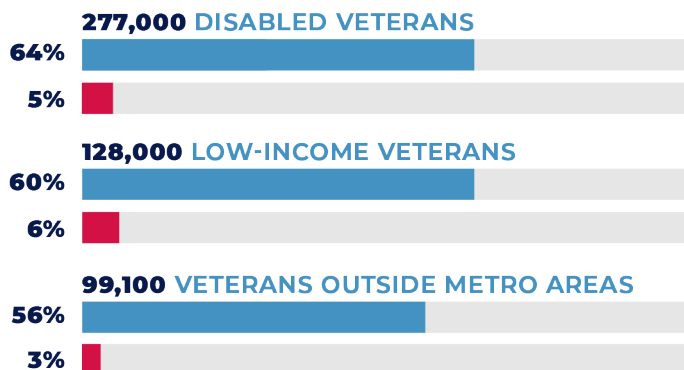
DEEP DIVE:

How Specific Factors Shape Veterans' Experience

For veterans, Social Security is the cornerstone of economic stability amid a rising cost of living. The benefits they earned through service are especially vital for disabled veterans, those with low incomes and those living outside of major metropolitan areas.

Social Security Supports a Majority of Disabled, Low-Income & Rural Veterans

The majority of veterans with disabilities (including those with service-connected disabilities and non-service-connected disabilities), low-income veterans and rural veterans receive Social Security. These groups can face higher medical costs, fewer providers and longer travel to VA and other health care providers on top of everyday cost of living challenges.⁴



Without Social Security, Veterans Could Struggle to Make Ends Meet

For a veteran who is not in the labor force (for example, retired or not working due to disability), a typical monthly Social Security check is about \$1,600, and a typical SSI check is just \$980. A late or lost check could mean disaster for household budgets that are already stretched thin.



IN PENNSYLVANIA, ONE MONTH OF SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS WOULD PAY FOR:

- 3 months of groceries
- 1 monthly mortgage payment
- 6 weeks of rent
- Nearly one year of out-of-pocket medical expenses (average for an adult 65+)
- 5 weeks of in-home care from a home health aide (at 10 hours per week), or
- 6 weeks of transportation expenses, such as car payments, gas and bus fare

STORIES FROM THE FIELD:

Personal Stories of Veterans' Experience



Will Lillich, Army (Ret.)

PA-10

"I enlisted in the Army in 2003 and served two tours in Iraq. I answered the call for my country - but now my country is not interested in following through on the promises it made its veterans," said Will Lillich, U.S. Army veteran. "Social Security is more than a policy - it's a promise made to our seniors, veterans, and disabled Americans. But the Trump Administration has made it very clear that they plan to cut existing and future benefits, including this program. And when all of this is used to pay for bigger tax breaks for billionaires and big corporations, it's not about cost saving. They're just taking from working people to give to the rich."



CWO Gloria East, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)

PA-10

"Social Security is a vital supplement to Veterans who may not be collecting retirement pay or they may be only collecting a small disability benefit. Not only did they pay into Social Security, but they have done a great service for their country. Veterans' pay and benefits must be protected. It's disappointing it's so easy for our elected officials to make decisions about things that don't affect them."

APPENDIX:

Methodology

The data analysis uses the 2019-2023 American Community Survey accessed via [IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota](#). We use a five-year dataset to have a sufficient sample size to analyze state-level data. Racial groups include people who identify as Latino and/or Hispanic and Latinos may be of any race. People are identified as having a disability in this analysis if they responded that they have difficulty in one or more of the following six realms: vision, hearing, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living. People may have multiple disabilities. This is a limited definition of disability that excludes a portion of disabled people. While people across the income spectrum may have difficulty making ends meet, in this analysis we define “low-income” as having household income below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

	Total population	Receives Social Security		Receives SSI	
		Population	Share	Population	Share
Nonveterans	9,816,000	2,161,600	22.0%	318,900	3.2%
Veterans	656,700	360,600	54.9%	18,200	2.8%
Men veterans	606,800	345,700	57.0%	17,200	2.8%
Women veterans	49,874	14,946	30.0%	1,048	2.1%
Native American veterans	960	*	*	*	*
Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander veterans	5,100	1,600	30.9%	*	*
Black veterans	58,600	24,400	41.6%	3,200	5.5%
Latino veterans	22,200	5,900	26.7%	*	*
Multiracial veterans	29,200	9,100	31.1%	1,200	4.2%
White veterans	562,800	325,200	57.8%	13,400	2.4%
Low income veterans (below 200% federal poverty line)	128,100	76,800	60.0%	7,400	5.8%
Metro area veterans	511,000	279,400	54.7%	14,200	2.8%
Nonmetro area veterans	99,100	55,400	55.9%	3,000	3.0%
Disabled veterans	276,600	176,700	63.9%	13,300	4.8%
Under 62 veterans	255,000	13,700	5.4%	5,700	2.2%
62 and older veterans	401,700	346,900	86.4%	12,600	3.1%

Source: National Partnership for Women & Families analysis using American Community Survey 2019-2023 five-year dataset via IPUMS.org. Racial groups include people who identify as Latino and/or Hispanic and Latinos may be of any race.

APPENDIX:

Sources

- ¹ National Partnership for Women & Families. (2025, March). *America's Women and the Wage Gap*. Retrieved 7 August 2025, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/americas-women-and-the-wage-gap.pdf>
- ² Congressional Research Service. (2019, June 5). Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress. Retrieved 7 August 2025, from <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R44321.pdf>. See also Library of Congress. (n.d.) *Legacies of Service: Celebrating Native Americans*. Retrieved 7 August 2025, from <https://www.loc.gov/collections/veterans-history-project-collection/serving-our-voices/diverse-experiences-in-service/legacies-of-service-celebrating-native-americans/>; Hallsell, T. (2024). "It is encouraging to see this much progress"; *Malmstrom Air Force Base and Civil Rights Activism in Great Falls, Montana, 1947-1984*. Retrieved 7 August 2025, from <https://www.malmstrom.af.mil/Portals/43/20240300%20%28U%29%20Hist%20TAH%20MAFB%20and%20OCR%20Activism%20in%20GF.pdf>
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