

# Caring for an Older Veteran

A comparison of informal caregivers whose care recipient is a veteran versus informal caregivers whose care recipient is not a veteran

## PURPOSE

This profile examines the differences in caregiver demographics and the dynamics at play between those who are caring for a U.S. veteran older adult (60 years or older) at home (N=309) and those who are caring for a non-veteran older adult at home (N=1,259). The data used in this profile were collected by interview in December 2016 for the Administration for Community Living’s outcome evaluation of the Older Americans Act Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP).

These comparisons can help organizations in the National Aging Network, an informal network of home- and community-based care providers, understand the needs and the characteristics of caregivers of veterans.



**Caregivers of Veterans** are caregivers who have a care recipient who is a veteran (age 60 or older)

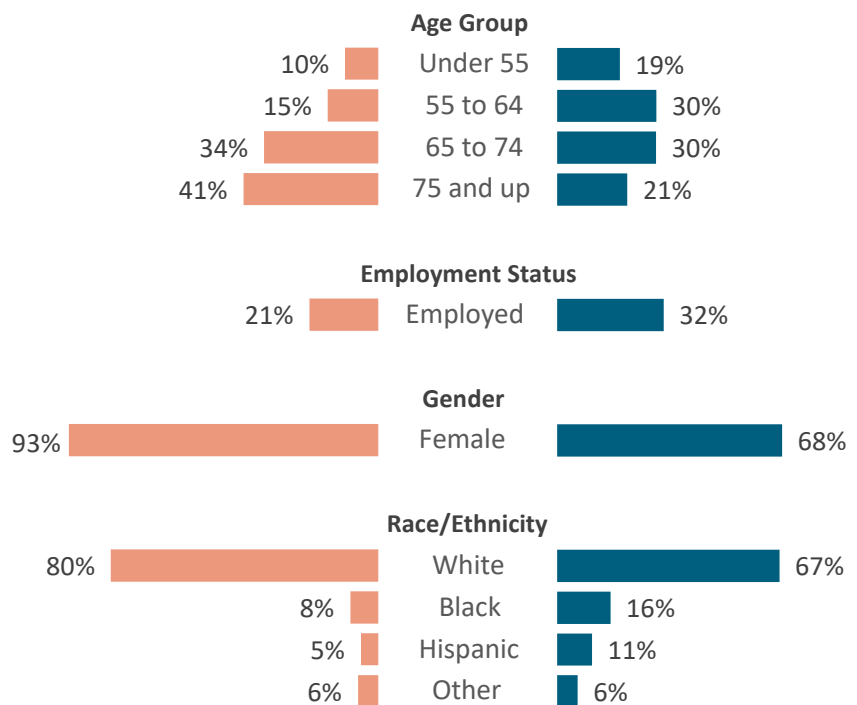


**Caregivers of Non-Veterans** are caregivers who have a care recipient who is not a veteran

## CAREGIVER DEMOGRAPHICS

- The mean age of caregivers of veterans was 70 years, while the mean age of caregivers of non-veterans was 65 years.
- More caregivers of non-veterans were employed (32%) compared with caregivers of veterans (21%).
- More caregivers of veterans were female (93%) compared with caregivers of non-veterans (68%).
- More caregivers of veterans identified as white (80%) compared with caregivers of non-veterans (67%).

**Caregivers of Veterans and Caregivers of Non-Veterans by age group, employment status, gender, and race/ethnicity**



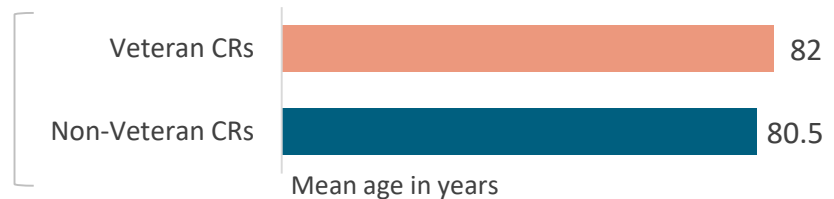
## NUMBER OF YEARS CAREGIVING



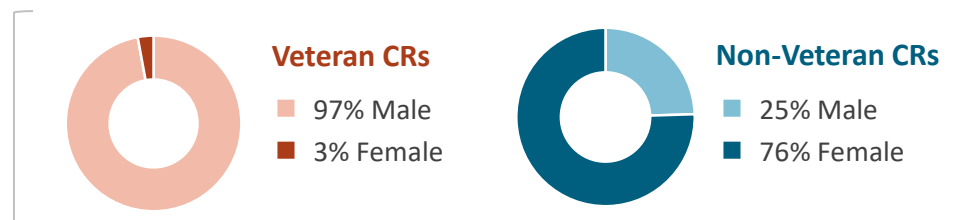
On average, caregivers of non-veterans had been caregiving for **7.0 years**, compared with an average of **5.7 years** for caregivers of veterans.

## CARE RECIPIENT CHARACTERISTICS

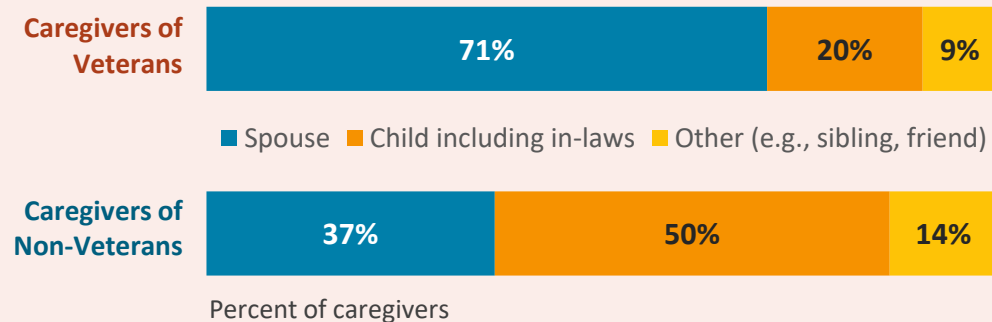
The average age of veteran care recipients (CRs) was **82**, compared with an average age of **80.5** for non-veteran CRs.



Veteran CRs were **97% male**, while non-veteran CRs were **25% male**.



## RELATIONSHIP TO CARE RECIPIENT



More caregivers of veterans were the CR's **spouse (71%)** compared with caregivers of non-veterans (**37%**).

## CARE RECIPIENT DIAGNOSED WITH DEMENTIA OR ALZHEIMER'S

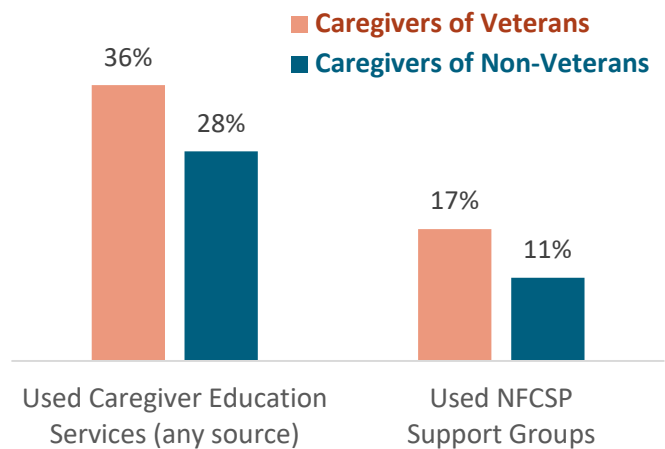
**62%** of veteran CRs were diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementias compared with **49%** of non-veteran CRs.



## USE OF CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICES

**Caregivers of veterans used more support services than caregivers of non-veterans.** Thirty-six percent of caregivers of veterans used education services (from any source) compared with 28% of caregivers of non-veterans. Caregivers of veterans used similar amounts of respite care as caregivers of non-veterans.

Among a subgroup of 1,242 caregivers who were listed as clients of an Area Agency on Aging across the country, 17% of caregivers of veterans used NFCSP support groups in the past 6 months compared to 11% of caregivers of non-veterans.



## Key Differences Between Veteran and Non-Veteran Caregivers

- Caregivers of veterans were older than non-veteran caregivers, with an average age of 70 compared to an average age of 65 for non-veteran caregivers.<sup>1</sup>
- Caregivers of non-veterans were more likely to have part-time or full-time employment.<sup>1</sup>
- On average, veteran CRs were older than non-veteran CRs.<sup>2</sup>
- More veteran CRs were male compared with non-veteran CRs.<sup>1</sup>
- Almost three-fourths of caregivers of veterans were spouses of CRs compared to a little over one-third of caregivers of non-veterans.<sup>1</sup>
- Veteran CRs were more likely to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementias in comparison to non-veteran CRs.<sup>1</sup>
- Caregivers of veterans were more likely to report using caregiver education services (from any source) compared with caregivers of non-veterans.<sup>2</sup>
- Among the subset of caregivers who were AAA clients, caregivers of veterans were more likely to use NFCSP support groups in the past 6 months compared with caregivers of non-veterans.<sup>2</sup>

## DATA SOURCE

This profile utilized the data collected by Westat during baseline interviews for the NFCSP outcome evaluation. The sample of 1,568 caregivers reside in 43 states in the United States. Veteran status of the CR was determined by the caregiver's YES or NO response to the survey item: "Is your care recipient a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?" Information about NFCSP, evaluation sample design, and the evaluation findings are publicly available at [https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2018-12/Caregiver\\_Outcome\\_Evaluation\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2018-12/Caregiver_Outcome_Evaluation_Final_Report.pdf).

<sup>1</sup>Significantly different at  $p$ -value < 0.001    <sup>2</sup>  $p$ -value < 0.01

Group means and frequencies were calculated for each characteristic. T-test, Chi-square, and Mantel-Haenszel chi-square statistics were used to test significant differences between veteran and non-veteran caregivers. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number.