

# California Veterans in the Workforce 2022



**EDD** Employment  
Development  
Department  
State of California



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## Executive Summary

In 2022, an estimated 18.4 million veterans lived in the United States, including 1.38 million that consider California their home.<sup>1</sup> California's veterans have served in time periods that extended before 1941 to the latest armed conflicts in the Middle East. Over 117,600 of California's veterans were in active duty for twenty years or more during their enlistment periods. According to the latest figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, the largest segments of California's veterans last served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force branches of the U.S. armed forces.<sup>2</sup>

## Key Findings in 2022

### State-to-State Comparison

- Nationwide, the largest number of veterans lived in the following states: Texas (1.63 million), Florida (1.39 million), California (1.38 million), Ohio (719,700), and Pennsylvania (701,600). These five states accounted for 31.7 percent of the nation's veteran population in 2022.

### Demographics

- California accounted for 7.5 percent of the nation's veteran population with 1,259,700 men and 123,600 women who served. In terms of age cohorts, six out of every ten veterans (63.8 percent) in the state were 55 years and older.

### Veterans in the Workforce

- Some of the latest research on veterans in the workforce suggest that employers value a variety of veterans' unique skills and abilities such as: successfully manage high-pressure situations, proactively handle tasks and workflows, and effectively create outside of the box solutions to business problems.
- In 2022, 535,500 of the state's veterans, or 38.7 percent, held a bachelor's degree or higher, including 296,100 with a bachelor's degree, 176,700 with a master's, 32,800 with a doctorate (Ph.D.), and 29,900 with a professional degree (M.D., D.D.S.).

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey of Households, 12-month moving average.

<sup>2</sup> Army (467,000), Navy (340,900), Marine Corps (192,200), Air Force (169,300) (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

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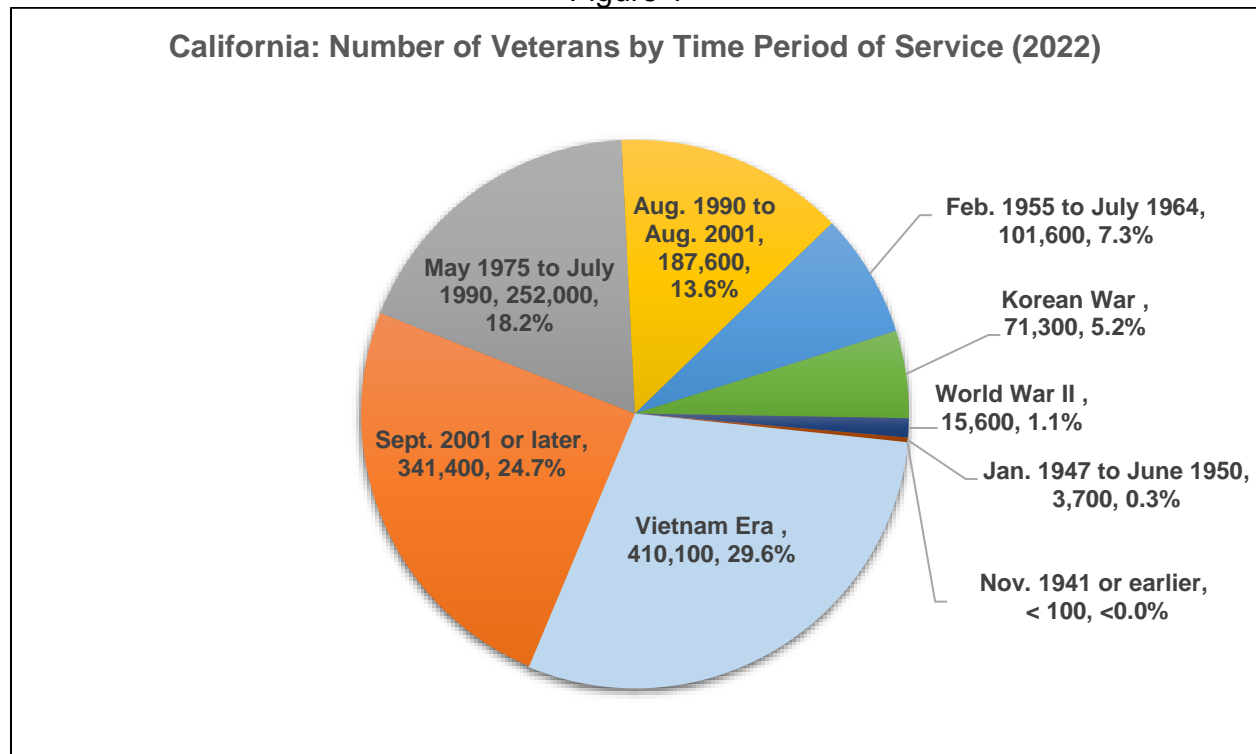
## State-to-State Comparisons and Time Period of Service

In 2022, there were 18,396,500 veterans residing in the United States. Texas (1.63 million), Florida (1.39 million), California (1.38 million), Ohio (719,700), and Pennsylvania (701,600) had the largest number of veterans in 2022. Three out of every ten (31.7 percent) of the nation's veterans resided in one of these five states.

California accounted for 7.5 percent of the nation's veteran population: 1.2 million men and 123 thousand women. In terms of age cohorts, six out of every ten veterans (63.8 percent) in the state were 55 years and older. The following provides a detailed breakout of veterans by age in 2022: 55 years and older (883,700); between 35 and 54 (344,000); between 25 and 34 (130,100); and between 18 and 24 (25,500).

California's veterans have served in military operations from November 1941 and earlier to present day conflicts across the world. The largest percent share of the state's veterans, 29.6 percent, served during the Vietnam Era and just over 24 percent (24.7 percent) served in September 2001 or later. As the state's veterans age, the percent share of veterans that served prior to 1950 continue to decline. Time periods of their military service are as follows: World War II (1.1 percent), January 1947 to June 1950 (0.3 percent), and November 1941 or earlier (less than 0.0 percent).<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey of Households, 12-month moving average

<sup>3</sup> Military Time Periods: World War II (1939-1945), Korean War (1950-1953), and Vietnam Era (1964-1975).

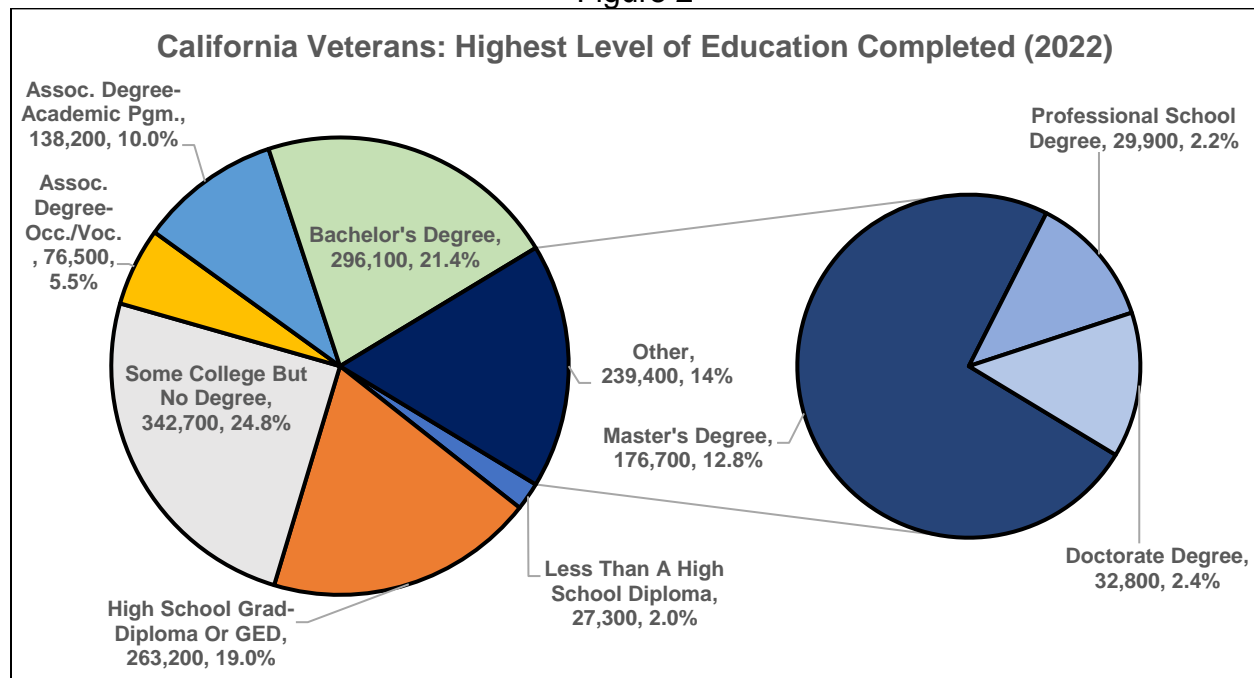
## Skills and the Educational Attainment of Veterans

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Transition Assistance Program, approximately 200,000 men and women leave U.S. military service and return to life as civilians every year, a process known as the military to civilian transition. Recent research on veterans within the workforce found that employers value veterans for their unique technical and soft skill sets honed through military service and their ability to work efficiently within an organizational system.

Research by Recruit Military argues that veterans are well-versed in small unit leadership at earlier stages in their careers than their civilian counterparts and work effectively within an organizational system.<sup>4</sup> A research study conducted by the Center for a New American Security found lower turnover rates among employed veterans once they have found the correct job fit.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the study found that veterans remain with a company 8.3 percent longer than nonveterans and that veterans were thirty-nine percent more likely to be promoted earlier than nonveterans within a firm.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2022, 535,500 of the state's veterans, or 38.7 percent, held a bachelor's degree or higher, including 296,100 with a bachelor's degree, 176,700 with a master's, 32,800 with a doctorate (Ph.D.), and 29,900 with a professional degree (M.D., D.D.S.). Just under twenty-five percent of veterans (342,700) had some college experience, but no degree.

Figure 2



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey of Households, 12-month moving average, total will not sum due to rounding.

<sup>4</sup> RecruitMilitary. [Four Workplace Trends We're Watching This Year \(2022\)](#).

<sup>5</sup> Center for a New American Security. [Onward and Upward: Understanding Veteran Retention and Performance in the Workforce](#).

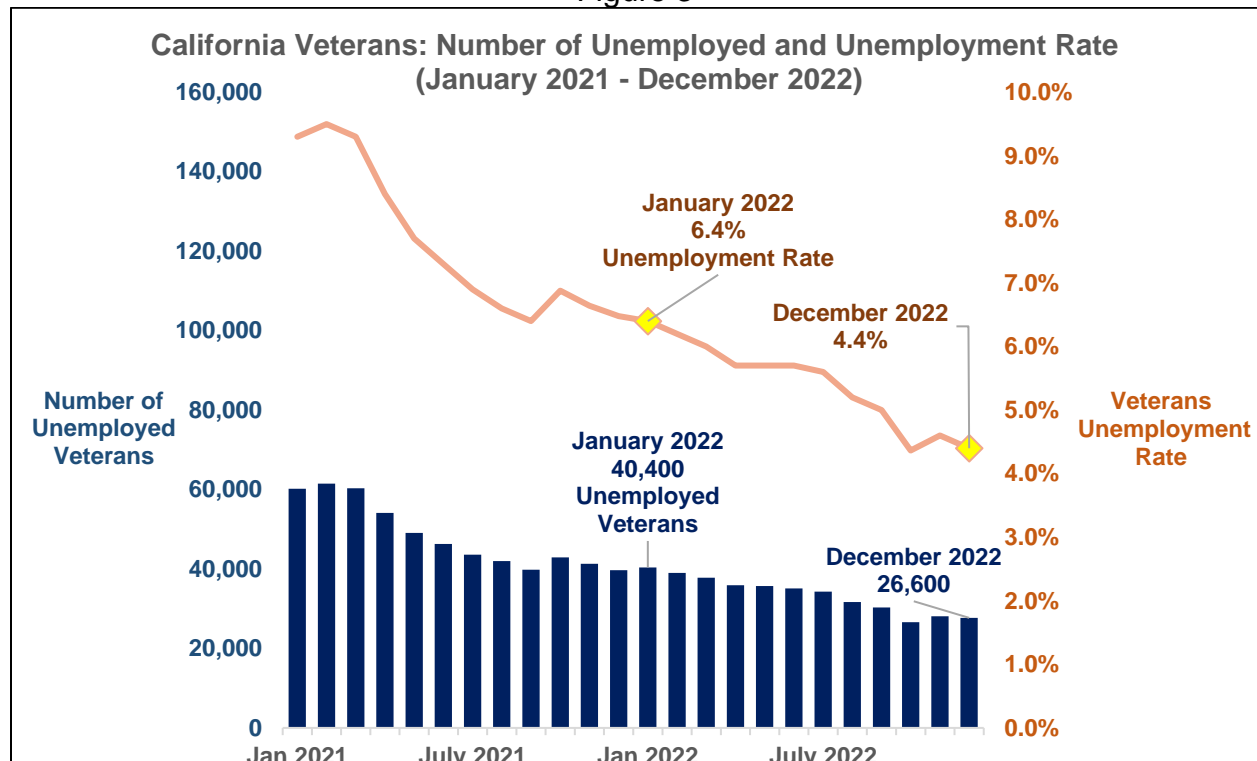
## California Veterans in the Civilian Labor Force

Over the course of California’s economic expansion (April 2020-December 2022), the state’s economy experienced a gain of 2.9 million nonfarm jobs and a 12.0 percentage points decline in the statewide seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, going from 16.1 percent to 4.1 percent.<sup>6</sup>

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the civilian labor force is the number of people who are either working (employed) or actively looking for work (unemployed). The civilian labor force for veterans decreased from 630,600 to 603,200 over the course of calendar year 2022. Between January 2022 and December 2022, the number of employed veterans experienced a net decrease of 13,600 persons, going from 590,200 to 576,600 over those twelve months. In addition, the number of unemployed veterans declined by 13,800 persons, moving from 40,400 persons in January 2022 to 26,600 persons in December 2022.

One of the economic indicators used to make assessments on the economic health of a state economy during recession and expansion periods is the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate for veterans declined by 2.0 percentage points between January 2022 (6.4 percent) and December 2022 (4.4 percent).

Figure 3



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey of Households, 12-month moving average

<sup>6</sup> California Employment Development Department’s (EDD) Labor Market Information Division (LMID), [EDD-LMID web page](#).

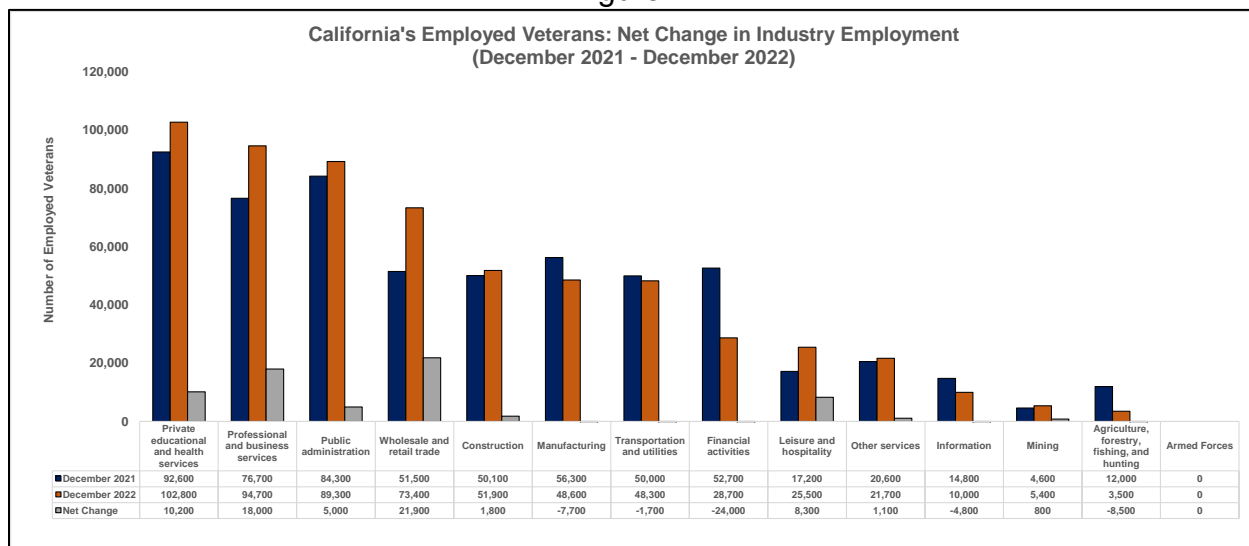
# California Veterans: Industries and Occupations

## Industries

When examining the concentration of veterans within the major industry sectors in California’s economy, veterans had net gains in eight industry sectors and net losses in five industry sectors between December 2021 and December 2022. The largest year-over gains during that period were in the following industries: wholesale and retail trade (21,900); professional and business services (18,000); private educational and health services (10,200); and leisure and hospitality (8,300). The largest net year-over losses were within the financial activities (-24,000) and agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (-8,500) industries.

Based upon data from the California Employment Development Department’s (EDD) industry employment projections<sup>7</sup>, a large segment of the state’s employed veterans held jobs within industries that will grow at a rate faster than the statewide average over the next ten years. According to the EDD’s 2020-2030 industry employment projections, the private educational and health services industry sector is forecasted to grow by 19.0 percent; 1.9 percentage points higher than the statewide average (17.1 percent). In addition, the professional and business services sector is forecasted to increase its employment by over twenty percent (21.7 percent) over the ten-year projection period. However, relatively hefty employment declines are forecasted for the state’s mining industry whose employment levels are forecasted to decline by 20.0 percent over the projection period.

Figure 4



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey of Households, 12-month moving average

<sup>7</sup> California Employment Development Department (EDD) Industry Employment Projections 2020-2030. [EDD Employment Projections](#)

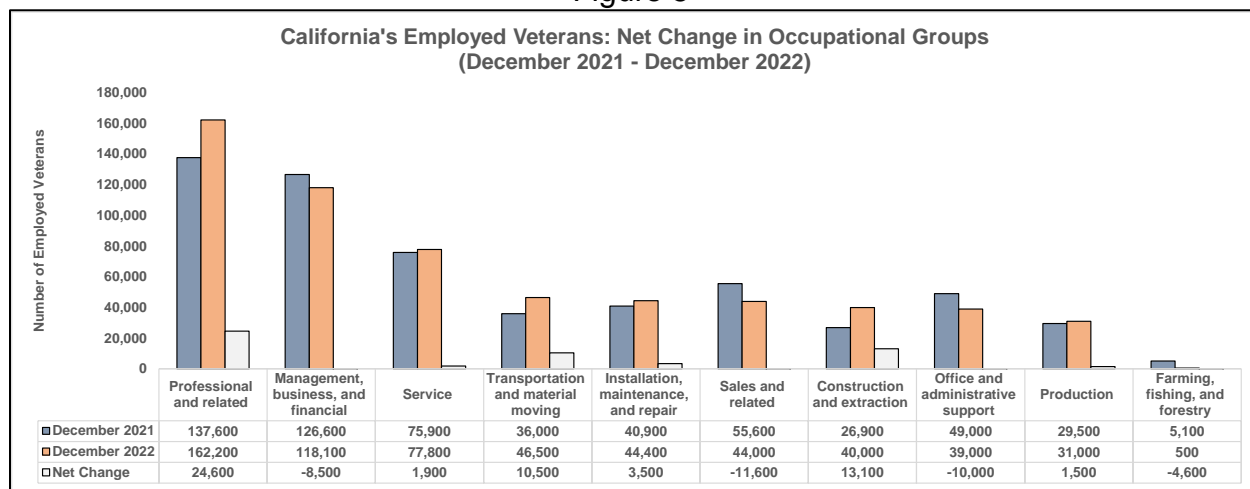
## Occupations

Veterans started their military careers as either enlisted personnel or officers depending on a military recruiter’s assessment of their level of education, personal goals, and qualifications.<sup>8</sup> Enlisted personnel are technical experts that have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure the success of their unit’s missions. Officers manage enlisted personnel, plan missions, provide orders, and assign tasks.<sup>9</sup> These unique roles are key to the functioning of our armed forces and provide the foundation for a career upon their reentry into the civilian workforce.

In 2022, California veterans were employed largely in occupational groups closely tied to their previous military careers, such as professional and related occupations. Occupations within the professional and related segment include, but are not limited to, the following: computer and mathematical, healthcare practitioners, legal, and postsecondary teaching occupations.

By the close of calendar year 2022, the largest number of California’s veterans were employed in the following occupational groups: professional and related (162,200); management, business, and financial (118,100); service (77,800); and transportation and material moving (46,500) occupations. In December 2022, just over two-thirds (67.0 percent) of employed veterans were employed in one of the aforementioned occupational groups. The lowest concentrations of employed veterans were in the following occupational groups in 2022: office and administrative support (39,000); production (31,000); and farming, fishing, and forestry (500) occupations.

Figure 5



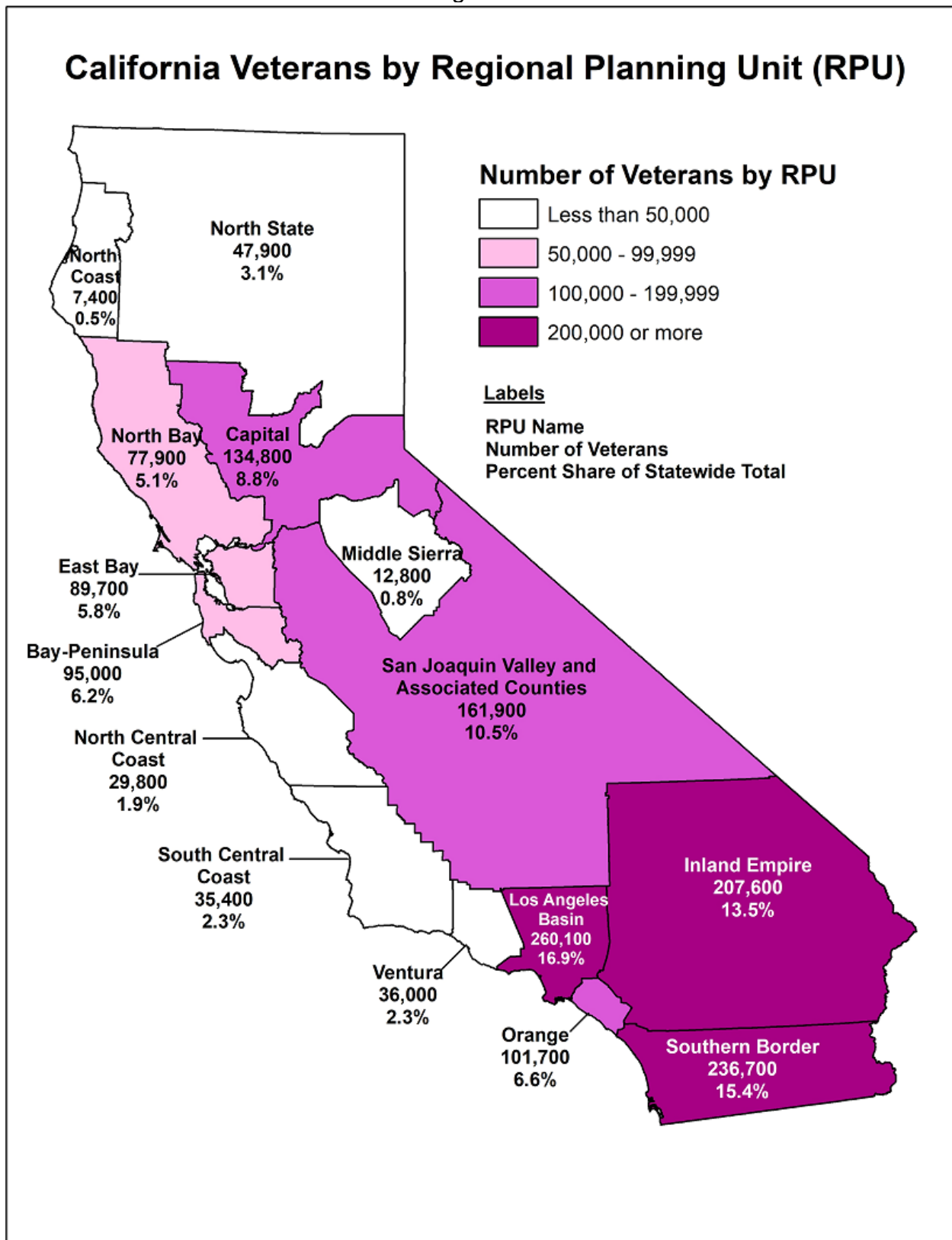
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey of Households, 12-month moving average

<sup>8</sup> Military OneSource. [Understanding the Roles of Military Officers and Enlisted Service Members.](#)

<sup>9</sup> Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Program. What's the Difference? Enlisted VS. Officer. [What's the Difference? Enlisted VS. Officer.](#)



Figure 6



Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Population Model, September 2022

**Table 1  
Number of Veterans and Percent Share of U.S. Total**

| <b>States</b>        | <b>Number of Veterans</b> | <b>Percent Share of Total</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Alabama              | 351,600                   | 1.9%                          |
| Alaska               | 67,900                    | 0.4%                          |
| Arizona              | 436,400                   | 2.4%                          |
| Arkansas             | 225,300                   | 1.2%                          |
| California           | 1,383,300                 | 7.5%                          |
| Colorado             | 381,300                   | 2.1%                          |
| Connecticut          | 151,200                   | 0.8%                          |
| Delaware             | 69,100                    | 0.4%                          |
| District of Columbia | 26,000                    | 0.1%                          |
| Florida              | 1,393,200                 | 7.6%                          |
| Georgia              | 667,700                   | 3.6%                          |
| Hawaii               | 98,300                    | 0.5%                          |
| Idaho                | 124,200                   | 0.7%                          |
| Illinois             | 521,300                   | 2.8%                          |
| Indiana              | 396,700                   | 2.2%                          |
| Iowa                 | 202,700                   | 1.1%                          |
| Kansas               | 173,200                   | 0.9%                          |
| Kentucky             | 283,700                   | 1.5%                          |
| Louisiana            | 264,100                   | 1.4%                          |
| Maine                | 105,400                   | 0.6%                          |
| Maryland             | 417,900                   | 2.3%                          |
| Massachusetts        | 269,500                   | 1.5%                          |
| Michigan             | 554,700                   | 3.0%                          |
| Minnesota            | 275,700                   | 1.5%                          |
| Mississippi          | 189,600                   | 1.0%                          |
| Missouri             | 374,800                   | 2.0%                          |
| Montana              | 102,800                   | 0.6%                          |
| Nebraska             | 129,500                   | 0.7%                          |
| Nevada               | 244,100                   | 1.3%                          |
| New Hampshire        | 102,200                   | 0.6%                          |
| New Jersey           | 278,900                   | 1.5%                          |
| New Mexico           | 163,600                   | 0.9%                          |
| New York             | 679,800                   | 3.7%                          |
| North Carolina       | 686,900                   | 3.7%                          |
| North Dakota         | 48,600                    | 0.3%                          |
| Ohio                 | 719,700                   | 3.9%                          |
| Oklahoma             | 275,500                   | 1.5%                          |
| Oregon               | 314,200                   | 1.7%                          |

|                            |                   |               |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>Pennsylvania</b>        | <b>701,600</b>    | <b>3.8%</b>   |
| <b>Rhode Island</b>        | 64,000            | 0.3%          |
| <b>South Carolina</b>      | 386,100           | 2.1%          |
| <b>South Dakota</b>        | 62,500            | 0.3%          |
| <b>Tennessee</b>           | 495,700           | 2.7%          |
| <b>Texas</b>               | 1,635,500         | 8.9%          |
| <b>Utah</b>                | 149,700           | 0.8%          |
| <b>Vermont</b>             | 36,900            | 0.2%          |
| <b>Virginia</b>            | 704,800           | 3.8%          |
| <b>Washington</b>          | 493,600           | 2.7%          |
| <b>West Virginia</b>       | 144,100           | 0.8%          |
| <b>Wisconsin</b>           | 321,600           | 1.7%          |
| <b>Wyoming</b>             | 49,600            | 0.3%          |
| <b>United States Total</b> | <b>18,396,500</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey of Households, 12-month moving average.

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