**Key Highlights for**

**Women Veteran Entrepreneurs**

* 57 % of female veteran entrepreneur consider themselves as social entrepreneur
* *Top motivations for female veteran entrepreneurs*
  + - 36% maintain personal freedom
    - 34% chance to implement own ideas
    - 31% opportunity to be financially independent
    - 30% helping society/supporting community
    - 29% having more free time/flexible hours
* *Top Barriers in Pursuing or Achieving Business Goals*
  + - 37% lack of access to capital
    - 34% Lack of financing
    - 27% Lack of experience in entrepreneurship or business ownership
    - 23% Irregular income
    - 22% Lack of mentors for my business
* *Navigation*
  + - 45% have difficulty navigating the resources in their local community
    - 55% have difficulty marketing their business
    - 62% believe the certification process is difficult
* *Lending*
  + - 55% indicated that the capital they need is not readily available
    - 48% applied for credit/financing with a lender or creditor
    - Of those that applied, 51% were denied credit/finance from lenders or creditors
    - 45% pay an interest rate of 15% or more on loan/credit card with the largest balance
    - 67% state that their business’ financial condition causes them stress
* *Military, Transition, and Entrepreneurship* 
  + - 65% needed time to figure out what to do with their life during their transition
    - 97% indicate that the skills they learned in military have helped them with their business
    - 60% indicate that entrepreneurship helped them find a purpose after military
    - 46% indicate that entrepreneurship made their transition into civilian life easier
* *Health and Well Being*
  + - 73% of female veteran entrepreneur indicate that their general health was good, very good, or excellent
    - 36% of female service-connected disabled veteran entrepreneur indicated that their disability creates obstacles in business ownership
    - 3% of female veteran entrepreneur had seriously consider attempting suicide this past year, of those 1 in 4 did NOT seek professional help.

**Data Brief: Women Veteran Entrepreneurs**

**July 2022**

This brief provides highlights from the 2021 National Survey of Military-Affiliated Entrepreneurs (NSMAE) focusing on female veteran entrepreneurs. NSMAE monitors trends in the activity, needs, and economic, social, and policy barriers of military-affiliated entrepreneurs in the United States. This annual survey and forthcoming public dataset will be an enduring source of current insights for public and private sector leaders, policymakers, and community-based organization on systemic barriers to and drivers of entrepreneurial success among veterans and their family members. To learn more about this study and other briefs, publications, and presentations visit <http://ivmf.syracuse.edu/nsmae-series>.

The findings in this brief are based on the data collected from 298 female veteran entrepreneurs, which represents 11.2% of the respondents in the 2021 survey.

**By the Numbers: Female Veteran Business Owners**

According to the Census Bureau’s 2018 Annual Business Survey:

* There are over 1.9 million veteran owned businesses (both employer and nonemployer businesses), with an estimated $1.2 trillion in revenue, approximately 5.2 million employees, and about $232.6 billion in annual payroll.
* Of those businesses, 8% are female veteran owned businesses, with an estimated $16.3 billion in revenue, just under 100,000 employees, and about $402 million in annual payroll.

Current public data sources on veteran business owners are limited to a finite set of questions nested within broader population surveys, draw from small samples, or are conducted at lengthy time intervals. Consequently, our collective understanding of veteran entrepreneurial activity is also limited. The NSMAE is designed to enhance our understanding of veteran business owners. There is a clear need to assess veteran business ownership on a more consistent and frequent basis to provide in-depth insight into the various stages and progress of veteran business ownership. This research effort addresses critical knowledge gaps of veteran entrepreneurship and the supporting efforts needed to assist veterans throughout their entrepreneurial journey. In this data brief, we provide some of the latest insights on female veteran entrepreneurs

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

* 57 % of female veteran entrepreneurs consider themselves as a social entrepreneur
* Yet only 8% of female veteran entrepreneurs have a nonprofit 501(c)(3) compared to 2% of male veteran entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneur = an entrepreneur who develops products and/or services that create solutions to social, cultural, or environmental issues

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Do you consider yourself a social entrepreneur? | Female | Male |
| Yes | 57% | 43% |
| No | 43% | 57% |

## Motivations to Entrepreneurship

*Top motivations for female veteran entrepreneurs*

* 36% maintain personal freedom
* 34% chance to implement own ideas
* 31% opportunity to be financially independent
* 30% helping society/supporting community
* 29% having more free time/flexible hours

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| Top Motivations to Entrepreneurship | Female | Male |
| Maintain personal freedom | 36% | 36% |
| The chance to implement own ideas | 34% | 31% |
| The opportunity to be financially independent | 31% | 36% |
| Helping society/supporting community | 30% | 19% |
| Having more free time/flexible hours | 29% | 24% |
| Improving my quality of life | 28% | 25% |
| Opportunities to innovate | 26% | 18% |
| Make my own decisions | 25% | 39% |
| Personal belief / faith | 18% | 19% |
| Secure future for my family | 17% | 20% |

*Likelihoods*

* Female veteran entrepreneurs are 1.58 times more likely to indicate “helping society/supporting community” as a top motivation for starting their business compared to male veteran entrepreneurs
* Female veteran entrepreneurs are 1.21 times more likely to indicate “more free time/flexible hours” compared to male veteran entrepreneurs.
* Female veteran entrepreneurs are 1.16 times more likely to indicate “opportunities to innovate” compared to male veteran entrepreneurs.

## Attitudes and Perspectives

* 86% indicate that owning their own company energizes them
* 92% are motivated to figure out how to make existing products/services better
* 85% indicate that inventing new solutions to problems is an important part of who they are
* 69% feel that being the founder of a business is an important part of who they are

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| Growth Oriented | Female | Male |
| I strongly prefer stability overgrowth for my business | 47% | 42% |
| I am willing to take on new loans in order to grow the business | 43% | 53% |
| I am committed to achieving growth, even if it means lower profits | 54% | 55% |
| I strongly prefer to keep the business at its present size | 14% | 15% |

# BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

## Nature of Business

* 76% are sole owners of their business (compared to 71% of males)
* 64% indicate that this is their first business/venture (compared to 56% of males)
* 51% indicate that the nature of their primary business is online e-commerce (compared to 32% of males)

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| Businesses/ventures were: | Female | Male |
| Service-based business | 61% | 57% |
| Both product and service-based business | 30% | 32% |
| Product-based business | 10% | 11% |

## Top Barriers in Pursuing or Achieving Business Goals

1. Lack of access to capital (37%)
2. Lack of financing (34%)
3. Lack of experience in entrepreneurship or business ownership (27%)
4. Irregular income (23%)
5. Lack of mentors for my business (22%)

## Difficulties

* 55% have difficulty marketing their business
* 47% find it difficult to do sales (being a salesperson for their products or services)

## Finance

* 31% were able to financially sustain themselves/family with income of their business (compared to 59% of males)
* 70% consider themselves to be successful (compared to 79% of males)
* Yet 1 in 5 female veteran entrepreneurs would close their business if they lost their top five customers (19%)

The average gross sales in 2020 were $705,971.41 (compared to $3,318,262.45 for males)

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| In 2020, their businesses/ ventures were: | Female | Male |
| Profitable | 37% | 52% |
| Breaking even | 18% | 14% |
| Reporting a financial loss | 45% | 34% |

*Likelihoods*

* Female veteran entrepreneurs were 1.32 times more likely to report a financial loss in 2020 compared to male veteran entrepreneurs
* Female veteran entrepreneurs were 1.29 times more likely to break even in 2020 compared to male veteran entrepreneurs

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| Business sales will double in next 5 years | Female | Male |
| Likely | 78% | 71% |
| Neither likely nor unlikely | 10% | 14% |
| Unlikely | 13% | 15% |

## LENDING

## Credit/Financing

* 55% indicated that the capital they need is not readily available (compared to 47% of males)
* 48% feel that there is NOT sufficient debt funding available for their business (compared to 41% of males)
* 23% indicate that Federal Funding Resources (PPP, EIDL, etc.) have been helpful for their business (compared to 38% of males)
* 48% applied for credit/financing with a lender or creditor (compared to 57% of males)
  + Of those that applied, 51% of those that applied for funding were turned down (compared to 36% of males)
  + 70% that were turned down did not apply again (compared to 61% of males)

67% state that their business’ financial condition causes them stress (compared to 63% of males)

### Capital Needed for Start Up

* 95% needed funding to start or acquire their business (compared to 96% of males)
* 64% needed less than $25,000 to start or acquire their business (compared to 56% of males)
* 40% needed less than $5,000 to start or acquire their business (compared to 32% of males)

### Capital Needed for Growth

* 93% needed funding to expand or grow your business in 2020 (compared to 94% of males)
* 59% needed less than $50,000 to expand or grow your business in 2020 (compared to 42% of males)
* 44% were not able to secure any funding needed to expand or grow your business in 2020 (compared to 27% of males)

## Debt

* The average business debt of female respondents was $39,814.
* 45% had an interest rate of 15% or higher on loan/credit card with the largest balance (compared to 21% of males)
* 49% reported no debt

# ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

## Government Policy, Support, and Programs

### Regulations

* 46% have difficulty coping with government bureaucracy, regulations & licensing requirements (compared to 56% of males)
* 49% indicate that support for their business is NOT high priority for policy at federal level (compared to 56% of males)
* 29% indicate that the process of obtaining licenses and permits for their business is NOT easy (compared to 36% of males)

### Programs and Support

* 57% feels that government programs aimed at supporting new and growing businesses are NOT effective (compared to 58% of males)
* 44% indicate there are not enough adequate government programs that support their business (compared to 48% of males)

## Business Environment

### Technology

* 53% feel that technological changes provide big opportunities in their market (compared to 54% of males)
* 50% can’t afford the latest technology (compared to 39% of males)
* 50% can’t easily access technological system, processes, and equipment (compared to 32% of males)

### Human Capital

* 52% find it very difficult to find employees with the necessary skills (compared to 61% of males)
* 53% can’t afford the cost of using subcontractors, suppliers and consultants (compared to 37% of males)
* 43% don’t have access to adequate employment support services for hiring qualified staff/employees (compared to 44% of males)

### Market

* 47% believes that their business can easily enter new markets (compared to 40% of males)
* 22% believes they can afford the cost of new market entry (compared to 31% of males)

## Entrepreneurial Education

* 31% feel that The Small Business Administration (SBA) services provide good & adequate support for their business (compared to 37% of males)
* 19% feel that colleges/universities provide good & adequate support for their business (compared to 24% of males)
* 25% feel that The VA services provide good &adequate support for their business (compared to 28% of males)
* 37% feel that The Small Business Administration (SBA) services do NOT provide good & adequate support for their business (compared to 34% of males)
* 49% feel that colleges/universities do NOT provide good & adequate support for their business (compared to 46% of males)
* 47% feel that The VA services do NOT provide good & adequate support for their business (compared to 43% of males)

## Community and Networks

### Belonging

* 69% feel responsibility for their local community (compared to 70% of males)
* 58% find people in their local community to relate to (compared to 63% of males)
* 56% feel a sense of belonging to their local community (compared to 63% of males)

### Navigation

* 39% have difficulty asking for assistance (compared to 32% of males)
* 45% have difficulty navigating the resources in their local community (compared to 39% of males)

## CERTIFICATIONS

* 57% formally or informally certified by a national, state, local or database/self-certification body (compared to 72% of males)
* 62% believe the certification process is difficult (compared to 63% of males)
* 43% find applying for non-government certifications to be difficult (compared to 36% of males)
* 22% find it easy to maintain the certification(s) (compared to 29% of males)

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| Certifications held | Female | Male |
| Small Business Administration | 68% | 56% |
| Center for Verification and Evaluation | 46% | 65% |
| Women's Business Enterprise National Council | 21% | 0% |
| National Women's Business Council | 7% | 0% |
| National Veteran-Owned Business Association | 7% | 16% |
| National Minority Supplier Development Council | 4% | 5% |
| Disability: IN (formerly USBLN) | 2% | 2% |
| National Veteran Business Development Council | 0% | 8% |

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| Percentage of revenue from clients that require certification | Female | Male |
| 0% of revenue are from certification | 62% | 47% |
| 1-80% of revenue are from certification | 22% | 34% |
| 81-100% of revenue are from certification | 16% | 19% |

## Resources Available

* 45% believe that the government does NOT provide adequate assistance with government contracting
* 42% believe that the government does NOT provide adequate assistance with the certification process
* 31% believe there are enough resources to assist through the certification process

## Corporate Contracts

* 45% indicate that finding corporate contracts that require certification(s) is not easy (compared to 56% of males)

## Government Contracts

* 43% find it difficult to do government contracting (compare to 62% of males)
* 59% find applying for the government certifications to be difficult (compared to 60% of males)

# DISABILITY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND WELLNESS

## Disability Related Experiences

* 80% have a service-connected disability
* 36% indicate that their disability creates obstacles in business ownership
* 35% indicate that entrepreneurship helped them with overcoming disability related challenges and barriers
* 34% indicate that entrepreneurship helped them with the recovery process
* 32% indicate that entrepreneurship played a significant role in their recovery process

## Health and Wellbeing

* 3% of female veteran entrepreneur had seriously consider attempting suicide this past year, of those 1 in 4 did NOT seek professional help.
* 75% of those that consider attempting suicide sought professional help (compared to 50% of males)

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| Overall perception of general health | Female | Male |
| Poor or fair | 27% | 23% |
| Good, very good, or excellent | 73% | 77% |

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| During the PAST YEAR, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide? | Female | Male |
| Yes | 3% | 6% |
| No | 97% | 94% |

# MILITARY TRANSITION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

* 97% indicate that skills learned in military have helped them with their business
* 41% were not interested in entrepreneurship prior to military service
* 65% needed time to figure out what to do with their life during their transition
* 57% felt the transition from military to civilian life was difficult
* 38% did not have a sense of purpose after the military (compared to 29% of males)

### Motivations for Pursuing Entrepreneurship

* 60% indicate that entrepreneurship helped them find a purpose after military (compared for 51% of males)
* 46% indicate that entrepreneurship made their transition into civilian life easier
* 37% indicate that entrepreneurship was critical for an easy transition from military into civilian life

# COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### Preparedness for Entrepreneurship

* 51% had difficulty with applying for COVID-19 Business Relief grants and loans (PPP, EIDL, etc.) (Compared to 44% of males)

### Impacts on Business Attitudes

* 23% indicate that COVID-19 crisis had negative impact on their decision to expand or grow your business
* 24% indicate that COVID-19 crisis had negative impact on their interest in entrepreneurship/business ownership
* 17% indicate that COVID-19 crisis had negative impact on their attitude toward entrepreneurship/business ownership
* 33% indicate that COVID-19 crisis had positive impact on their decision to expand or grow your business
* 32% indicate that COVID-19 crisis had positive impact on their interest in entrepreneurship/business ownership
* 35% indicate that COVID-19 crisis had positive impact on their attitude toward entrepreneurship/business ownership

## References

By the Numbers for Female Business Owners section is data analyzed using 2018 annual business survey

The majority of this data from this brief is data analyzed using Maury, R., Tihic, M., Pritchard, A., McKelvie, A., Euto, l. (2022). 2021 National Survey of Military-Affiliated Entrepreneurs. Syracuse, NY: Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Syracuse University

As with most survey research, this study is limited by voluntary self-selection into the sample and self-reporting by participants whose answer to each question item was voluntary. Although recruitment for this study was targeted to include various populations, the finding from this study should not be construed to be representative of the population of all veteran or military-affiliated business owners.

## ABOUT

Syracuse University’s D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) is the first national institute in higher education singularly focused on advancing the lives of the nation’s military, veterans, and their families.

Through its professional staff and experts, and with the support of founding partner JPMorgan Chase Co. as well as U.S. Navy veteran, IVMF Advisory Board Co-Chair, University Life Trustee and Co-Founder & Chairman Emeritus of the Carlyle Group Daniel D’Aniello ’68, H’20 and his wife, Gayle, the IVMF delivers leading programs in career and entrepreneurship education and training, while also conducting actionable research, policy analysis, and program evaluations. The IVMF also supports veterans and their families, once they transition back into

civilian life, as they navigate the maze of social services in their communities, enhancing access to this care working side-by-side with local providers across the country. The Institute is committed to advancing the post-service lives of those who have served in America’s armed forces and their families.

About Center of Excellence (CoE) for Veteran Entrepreneurship The mission of the Center of Excellence (CoE)

for Veteran Entrepreneurship is to create, collect, organize, and share knowledge, resources, and networks to advance entrepreneurial opportunities for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families. With support from founding partner Fiserv, this is accomplished through the development and delivery of

innovative programs and educational resources; timely and relevant research and policy analysis; and by cultivating veteran-connected ecosystems across the United States.

### In Collaboration with Whitman School of Management

The Martin J. Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University inspires students for a world of accelerating change. Offering B.S., MBA, M.S. and Ph.D. programs, all accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the Whitman School’s faculty includes internationally known scholars and researchers, as well as successful entrepreneurs and business leaders. Whitman continues to be ranked among the nation’s top business schools by U.S. News & World Report and Bloomberg Businessweek. To learn more about the Whitman School of Management, visit Whitman.syr.edu.

## SUGGESTED CITATION

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