



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES**

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November 1, 2025

Timothy Carroll
House Clerk
State House, Room 145
Boston, MA 02133

Michael D. Hurley
Senate Clerk
State House, Room 335
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Clerk Carroll and Clerk Hurley,

Pursuant to Section 2 of Chapter 115 of the Massachusetts General Laws, please find the Executive Office of Veterans Services (EOVS) Annual Report attached.

Sincerely,

Jon Santiago

CC:
Senator Michael Rodrigues, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Representative Aaron Michlewitz, House Chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Senator John Velis, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs
Representative Joe McGonagle, House Chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs

Legislative Mandate

The following report is issued pursuant to Section 2 of Chapter 115, summarized as follows:

... Annually, not later than November 1, the secretary shall report on the activities of the office and data collected related to veterans, including, but not limited to: (i) the number of recipients of state veteran benefits and applicants for benefits, delineated by municipality and demographic; (ii) a breakdown on the outcome of benefit appeal decisions pursuant to this section; (iii) a summary of the office's outreach to veterans on the availability of and process for applying for benefits; (iv) demographic and regional information available on the veteran population in the commonwealth; (v) directives in effect; and (vi) any legislative recommendations necessary to better serve veterans and their families in the commonwealth. The office shall publicly post the report on the office's website and submit the report to the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs, the clerks of the senate and house of representatives and the senate and house committees on ways and means.

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EOVS Veterans Benefit Recipient Regional Demographics

The Executive Office of Veterans Services (EOVS) administers financial, medical, and dental assistance to eligible veterans and their dependents under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 115. Chapter 115 is a means-tested program that provides eligible veterans and their families with financial support for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and medical care. In fiscal year 2025, EOVS provided Chapter 115 benefits to 4,599 veterans.

The HERO Act introduced several key expansions to Chapter 115, including broadened eligibility criteria, streamlined access for dependents, and the inclusion of behavioral health services as reimbursable benefits.

EOVS is currently working to implement a system for tracking regional demographic data for both applicants and benefit recipients.

Below is a listing of the number of Chapter 115 recipients based on their municipality:

City	Case Count	City	Case Count	City	Case Count
Abington	16	Hadley	11	Pelham	1
Acton	13	Halifax	16	Pembroke	14
Acushnet	16	Hamilton	5	Pepperell	7
Adams	17	Hampden	2	Pittsfield	84
Agawam	34	Hanover	13	Plainville	6
Alford	2	Hanson	2	Plymouth	43
Amesbury	35	Hardwick	1	Plympton	7
Amherst	14	Harvard	5	Princeton	3
Arlington	18	Harwich	15	Provincetown	4
Ashburnham	6	Hatfield	10	Quincy	111
Ashland	4	Haverhill	47	Randolph	16
Athol	15	Heath	2	Raynham	20
Attleboro	50	Hingham	8	Reading	11
Auburn	15	Hinsdale	5	Rehoboth	7
Avon	2	Holbrook	1	Revere	34
Ayer	7	Holden	7	Richmond	1
Barnstable	32	Holliston	4	Rochester	4
Barre	6	Holyoke	22	Rockland	36
Becket	4	Hopedale	4	Rockport	2
Bedford	32	Hopkinton	3	Rowley	6
Belchertown	17	Hudson	3	Royalston	1
Bellingham	5	Hull	16	Salem	41
Belmont	2	Huntington	3	Salisbury	23
Berkley	1	Ipswich	20	Sandisfield	5

City	Case Count	City	Case Count	City	Case Count
Beverly	44	Kingston	20	Sandwich	17
Billerica	27	Lakeville	16	Saugus	13
Blackstone	12	Lancaster	2	Savoy	1
Bolton	2	Lanesborough	2	Scituate	10
Boston	162	Lawrence	46	Seekonk	2
Bourne	17	Lee	7	Sharon	3
Boxford	2	Leicester	4	Sheffield	10
Boylston	1	Lenox	2	Shirley	14
Braintree	19	Leominster	45	Shrewsbury	10
Brewster	15	Lexington	3	Shutesbury	1
Bridgewater	10	Leyden	2	Somerset	24
Brimfield	3	Lincoln	3	Somerville	22
Brockton	52	Littleton	8	South Hadley	21
Brookfield	1	Longmeadow	4	Southampton	2
Brookline	9	Lowell	58	Southborough	1
Buckland	3	Ludlow	28	Southbridge	11
Burlington	5	Lunenburg	7	Southwick	9
Cambridge	45	Lynn	50	Spencer	19
Canton	15	Lynnfield	4	Springfield	96
Carver	22	Malden	9	Sterling	9
Charlemont	1	Manchester	2	Stockbridge	1
Charlton	4	Mansfield	10	Stoneham	12
Chatham	10	Marblehead	6	Stoughton	19
Chelmsford	12	Marion	3	Sturbridge	6
Chelsea	20	Marlborough	14	Sudbury	3
Chelsea V.H.	1	Marshfield	27	Sunderland	3
Cheshire	6	Mashpee	11	Sutton	4
Chester	1	Mattapoisett	8	Swampscott	2
Chesterfield	2	Maynard	5	Swansea	23
Chicopee	85	Medfield	2	Taunton	48
Clarksburg	4	Medford	13	Templeton	9
Clinton	13	Medway	12	Tewksbury	30
Cohasset	4	Melrose	17	Truro	2
Concord	3	Mendon	2	Tyngsborough	18
Conway	1	Merrimac	12	Upton	3
Dalton	11	Methuen	31	Uxbridge	10
Danvers	16	Middleborough	35	Wakefield	9
Dartmouth	51	Middleton	3	Wales	3

City	Case Count	City	Case Count	City	Case Count
Dedham	3	Milford	25	Walpole	8
Deerfield	1	Millbury	7	Waltham	15
Dennis	20	Millis	2	Ware	25
Dighton	7	Millville	1	Wareham	42
Douglas	3	Milton	2	Warren	11
Dracut	22	Monson	6	Watertown	9
Dudley	10	Montague	8	Webster	20
Duxbury	6	Nahant	3	Wellesley	3
East Bridgewater	12	Nantucket	1	Wellfleet	4
East Brookfield	1	Natick	14	Wendell	2
East Longmeadow	7	Needham	2	Wenham	1
Eastham	1	New Ashford	2	West Boylston	5
Easthampton	25	New Bedford	170	West Brookfield	3
Easton	24	New Marlborough	1	West Newbury	1
Edgartown	5	Newbury	5	West Springfield	45
Erving	2	Newburyport	16	West Stockbridge	3
Essex	2	Newton	2	Westborough	6
Everett	8	Norfolk	2	Westfield	70
Fairhaven	54	North Adams	42	Westford	6
Fall River	134	North Andover	14	Westhampton	3
Falmouth	42	North Attleborough	27	Westminster	4
Fitchburg	59	North Brookfield	2	Weston	1
Florida	3	North Reading	10	Westport	29
Foxborough	16	Northampton	53	Westwood	2
Framingham	34	Northborough	5	Weymouth	36
Franklin	12	Northbridge	12	Whitman	15
Freetown	4	Norton	17	Wilbraham	10
Gardner	49	Norwell	1	Williamsburg	3
Georgetown	4	Norwood	16	Williamstown	7
Gloucester	39	Oak Bluffs	3	Wilmington	18
Goshen	6	Oakham	1	Winchendon	14
Grafton	6	Orange	6	Winthrop	3
Granby	2	Orleans	4	Woburn	18
Granville	1	Otis	5	Worcester	122
Great Barrington	5	Oxford	12	Worthington	1
Greenfield	30	Palmer	28	Wrentham	3
Groton	2	Paxton	1	Yarmouth	21
Groveland	2				

Appeal Decision Outcomes

Any veteran aggrieved by a decision of a municipality or by EOVS regarding veterans' benefits may file an appeal with the EOVS Office of the General Counsel (OGC) within 45 days of receiving notice of the decision. The EOVS OGC is responsible for reviewing decisions made in the application and administration of benefits under M.G.L. Chapter 115, Section 2. Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, the Administrative Hearings Section is a division within the EOVS OGC that conducts administrative hearings to provide a neutral forum for the fair and independent resolution of contested matters. Hearings are conducted pursuant to the informal rules of administrative procedure at 801 C.M.R. 1.02.

The Administrative Hearings Section strives to work collaboratively with all parties to resolve disputes that are presented and, when possible, to reach mutually agreeable resolutions by leveraging the resources within the EOVS OGC. If a mutually agreeable resolution is not possible, the Administrative Hearings Section strives to ensure the just and faithful execution of laws, regulations, and policies to determine the outcome of cases presented.

From July 1, 2024, through July 1, 2025, the Administrative Hearings Section adjudicated a total of 38 cases, a significant decrease from the previous year's total of 71. This decline is attributed to the expanded eligibility criteria enacted under the HERO Act.

Below is a breakdown of appeal outcomes:

Municipality	Type of Appeal		Case Outcome
Agawam	Chapter 115		In favor of the petitioner
Saugus	Chapter 115		Petitioner Withdrew
Beverly	Chapter 115		Petitioner No show for hearing schedule
Methuen	Chapter 115		In favor of the petitioner
Fitchburg	Chapter 115		In favor of Fitchburg
Worcester	Chapter 115		Parties Settled
Franklin	Chapter 115		Parties Settled
East Falmouth	Chapter 115		Parties Settled
Springfield	Chapter 115		In favor of the petitioner
Pittsfield	Chapter 115		In favor of the petitioner
Lynn	Chapter 115		In favor of petitioner
Quincy	Chapter 115		Parties Settled
Gardner	Chapter 115		In favor of Gardner
Kingston	Chapter 115		Parties Settled
Springfield	Chapter 115		In favor of Springfield
Leeds	Chapter 115		Parties Settled

Municipality	Type of Appeal		Case Outcome
Leominster	Chapter 115		In favor of petitioner
Boston	Chapter 115		Parties Settled
Chelsea	Chapter 115		Parties Settled
EOVS	Annuity		In favor of EOVS
Winchendon	Chapter 115		Partially in Favor of Petitioner and Partially in Favor of Winchendon
East Falmouth	Chapter 115		In favor of East Falmouth
Stoneham	Chapter 115		In favor of Stoneham
Wareham	Chapter 115		Petitioner Withdrew
Maynard	Chapter 115		In favor of petitioner
Weymouth	Chapter 115		Remanded
Brockton	Chapter 115		Petitioner Withdrew
Boston	Chapter 115		In favor of Boston
Cambridge	Chapter 115		In favor of the petitioner
Franklin	Chapter 115		In favor of the petitioner
Ware	Chapter 115		Settled
Boston	Chapter 115		Partially in favor of the petitioner and partially in favor of Boston
Marshfield	Chapter 115		In favor of Marshfield
Franklin	Chapter 115		In favor of petitioner
Cambridge	Chapter 115		Parties Settled
Gardner	Chapter 115		In favor of petitioner
Weymouth	Chapter 115		In favor of petitioner
Stoughton	Chapter 115		In favor of Stoughton
Leominster	Chapter 115		Case pending by agreement of parties

Outreach

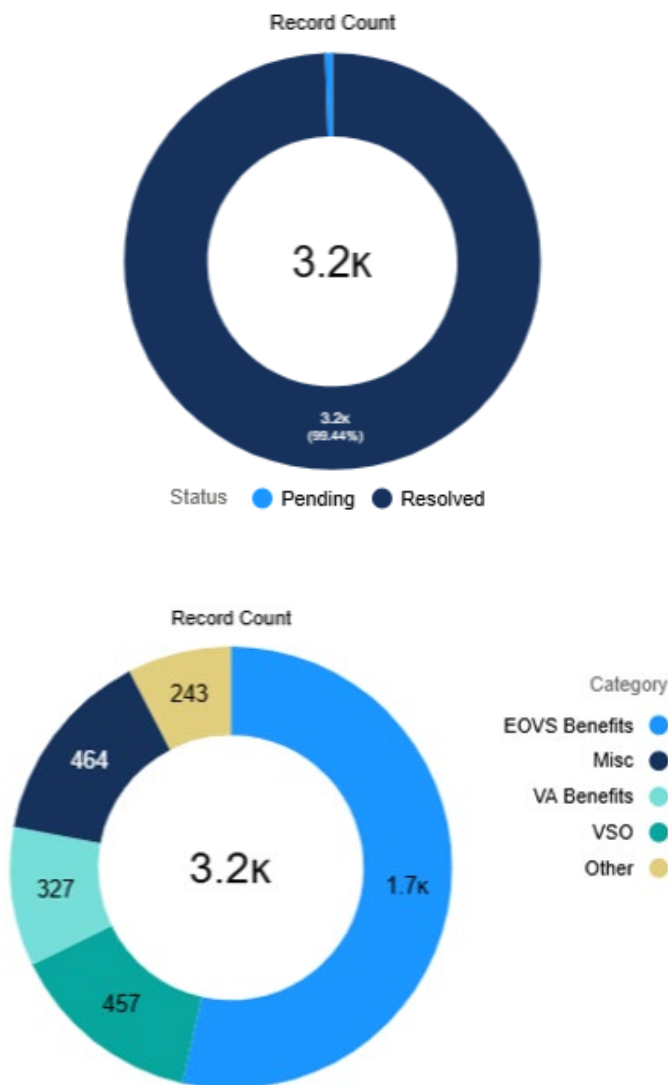
The EOVS Engagement Office, established in October 2023, handles constituent facing inquiries and outreach, working to ensure veterans have access to benefits and resources. The Engagement Office was developed as a new and innovative approach to leveraging information, resources, and partnerships across federal, state, local, and non-profit service providers. The mission of the office is to provide the highest level of service to those who've served us. EOVS Engagement is actively involved with outreach efforts to guarantee that Commonwealth's veterans can leverage state resources and expertise to lead full and successful lives. The Engagement Office is comprised of Constituent Services, the Women Veterans Network (WVN), the Statewide Advocacy for Empowerment (SAVE) Team, and the Supporting and Empowering Reintegration for Veterans Equality (SERVE) Outreach Team.

EOVS recognizes that women veterans may have unique needs and concerns. The WVN is a department within the Engagement Office dedicated to empowering women veterans—ensuring their voices are heard, their contributions acknowledged, and their well-being enhanced through education, advocacy, and collaboration. WVN provides members with a newsletter informing them of upcoming events and relevant news, as well as through social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn. Events focus on personal and professional growth, with an emphasis on networking and peer support. Since October 2024, WVN has hosted or co-hosted 9 events and tabled at 46 others, including the 17th Annual Women Veterans' Network Conference, the Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon, and the 20th Annual Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony. Currently, WVN has 3,297 members, up from 3,154 in the previous year.

SAVE is a statewide, peer-to-peer mobile outreach team specializing in veteran case management. SAVE team members operate regionally throughout the state and prioritize marginalized and vulnerable veterans. Through a peer-to-peer model, SAVE members help veterans navigate the issues they may be facing. Regardless of service type or discharge status, SAVE helps all veterans access the care, services, and benefits to which they are entitled. Since October 2024, the SAVE team has supported 491 veterans and participated in 54 veteran community events.

As part of the Engagement Office, SERVE works with veterans to navigate the justice system with confidence and peer support, providing them the tools and support necessary to achieve successful outcomes. SERVE operates as trusted peer-advocates committed to promoting justice, equality, and the overall well-being of our veteran community; helps veterans access peer support services, mental health and substance use treatment instead of potential incarceration; works directly with veterans to advocate on their behalf to the court system, facilitate connections with court staff, and provide case management; and works with first-time offender veterans who are eligible for pre-arraignment diversion through the BRAVE Act. Both VA eligible and non-VA eligible veterans receive continuous peer to peer connection and support from veteran members of the SERVE team for the duration of their treatment. Since October 2024, SERVE has facilitated the graduation of 26 veterans from Veteran Treatment Court programs and admitted 28 new veterans into its program.

One of the most impactful pieces of the Engagement Office is the Constituent Services Team. This team is a resource for veterans and their family members within the Commonwealth to resolve issues and seek guidance, resources, or services. Through leveraging internal subject matter experts and external partners, the Constituent Services Team provides the expertise and knowledge to empower our veterans and their families to make informed decisions and obtain benefits and services to which they are entitled. Since October 2024, the Constituent Services Team has assisted 3,208 unique constituent inquiries. Of those, 3,190 cases were successfully resolved or closed, resulting in a 99.4% success rate.



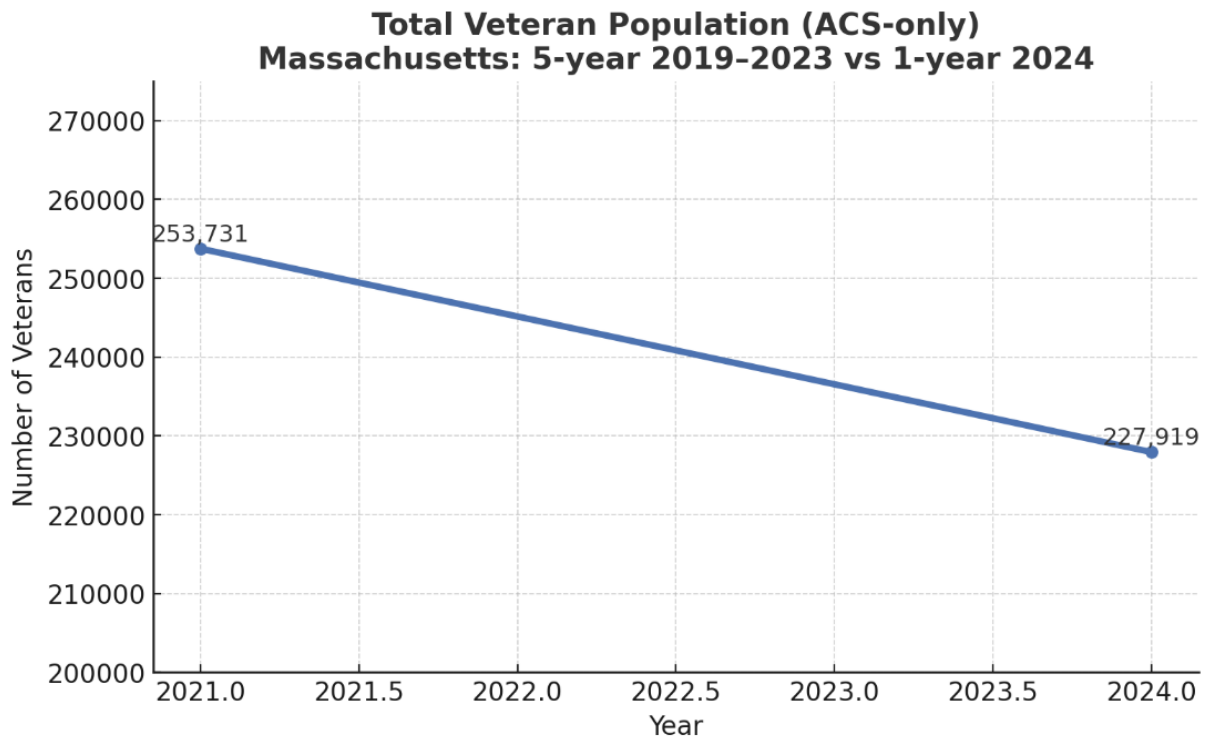
The EOVS Engagement Office is critical to meeting veterans in the community to inform them of all of the services that EOVS provides. Members of the Engagement Office frequently attend veteran focused events to meet with veterans and connect them with resources. Since October of 2024, the EOVS Engagement Team participated in 92 events throughout the Commonwealth.

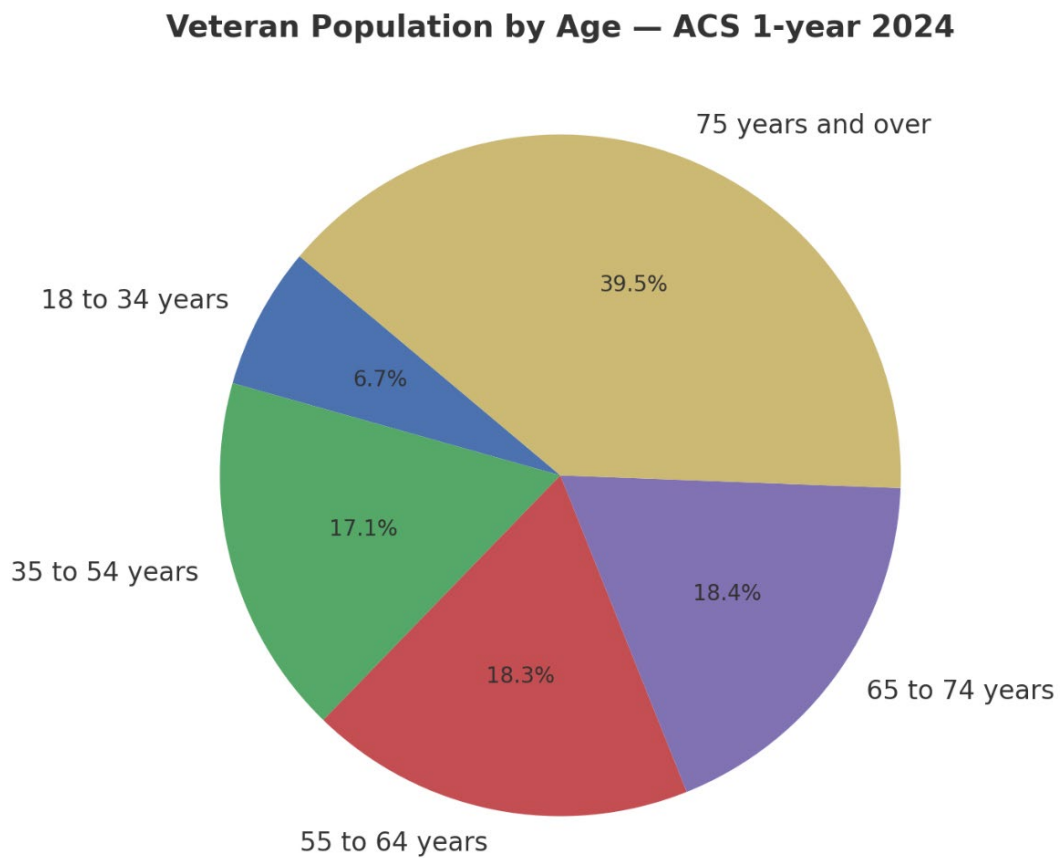
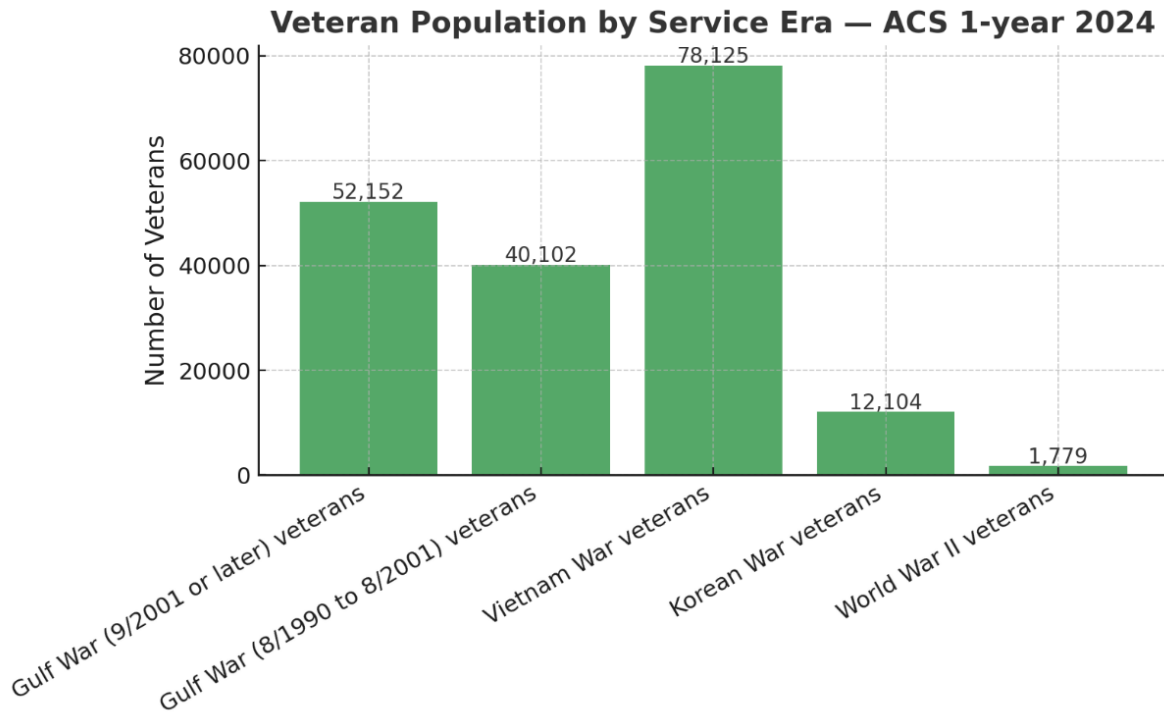
Veteran Population Demographics

The Census Bureau's American Community Survey provides an annual estimate of the veteran population. According to the Census Bureau, a veteran is defined as anyone who has previously served, regardless of service duration, in active duty in the armed forces. Relevant armed forces include the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard. Veterans are no longer actively serving and are considered civilians.

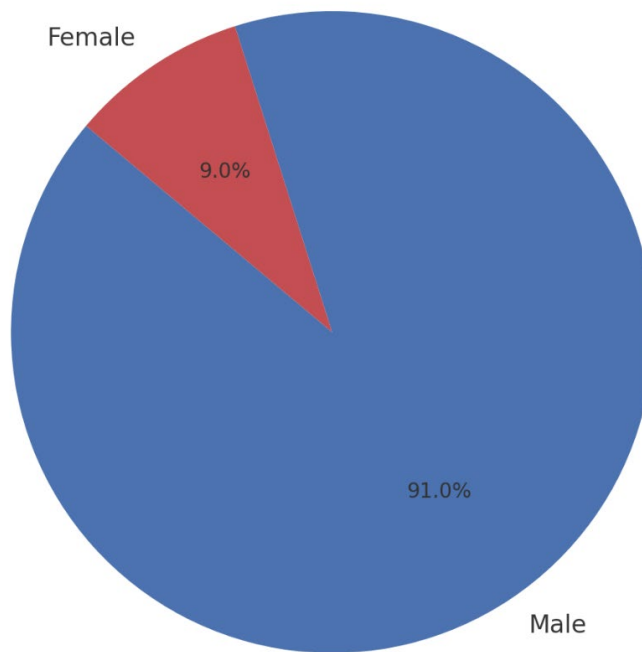
The most recent American Community Survey estimates that approximately 234,000 veterans currently reside in Massachusetts, representing about 4.1% of the state's adult civilian population. The veteran cohort is predominantly male, though the population of women veterans continues to grow modestly but steadily, increasing by 1.5% as a share of the total veteran population from 2023 to 2024. Many veterans are older: over half are age 65 or above, reflecting the drawdown of military service from earlier eras.

While the overall population has been gradually declining, it remains diverse in terms of service era, with significant representation from the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras. The racial and ethnic composition of the veteran population is also slowly diversifying, though it remains majority White, non-Hispanic. Massachusetts' veteran community is aging, predominantly male, and increasingly diverse, with women veterans becoming a steadily larger share of the population.

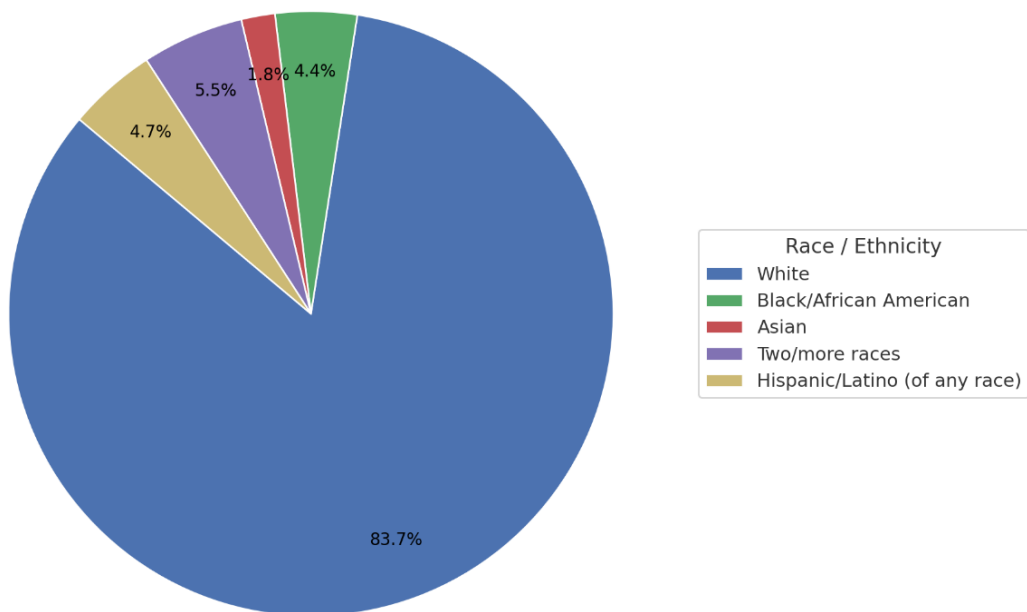




Veteran Population by Sex — ACS 1-year 2024



Veteran Population by Race / Hispanic Origin — ACS 1-year 2024



EOVS Directives

The Secretary of EOVS may issue directives on the administration of the Chapter 115 veterans benefit program pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 115 Section 2. The purpose of these directives is to provide guidance on recurring issues or questions for the consistent application of veterans' benefits. As of November 1, 2025, the following directives remain in effect:

Directive 04-05 Home Equity and Second Mortgages (August 9, 2004):

The Home Equity and Second Mortgages directive amends 108 CMR 6.01(4) by adding paragraphs (f) Second Mortgages and (g) Home Equity Loans and provides direction on whether those loans are to be considered as assets for the purpose of administering Chapter 115 benefits. Home Equity Lines and Second Mortgages are not an asset if the loan is used to repair, maintain, or make handicap accessible the current home. Loans for other purposes are reviewed on a case-by-case basis for Chapter 115 eligibility.

Directive 06-01 Prescription Advantage (March 7, 2006):

The Prescription Advantage directive instructs municipal Veteran Service Officers (VSO) on the requirement to enroll eligible veterans and dependents in the Prescription Advantage program to reduce Chapter 115 costs as an alternate source of benefits. Further, this directive informs VSOs that municipalities will not be reimbursed for prescription costs incurred by eligible veterans and dependents who are not enrolled in the Prescription Advantage program.

Directive 06-03 Medical Assistance, Nursing Home Care, & Assisted Living (June 14, 2006):

The Medical Assistance, Nursing Home Care, & Assisted Living directive provides guidance and clarification on how VSOs should process claims for veterans needing health care services, including assisted living and nursing home care. This directive informs VSOs that they must file an application under MGL Chapter 118E for medical services available under Chapter 118E on behalf of any appropriate person seeking veterans benefits to pay for medical services. This directive also confirms that residence in an assisted living facility is reimbursable under Chapter 115 as a shelter expense and the costs associated with assisted living shelter shall not exceed the amount in the most recent Budget Amounts directive.

Directive 06-06 Medicare Part D (November 3, 2006):

The Medicare Part "D" directive instructs VSOs on enrolling eligible recipients into the Medicare Part D Prescription plan and explains the requirement that any Chapter 115 recipient with an income of less than one-hundred and fifty percent (150%) of the Federal Poverty Level is required to apply for the low-income subsidy.

Directive 09-01 Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) (January 9, 2009):

The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) directive explains that shelter and fuel payments made directly to a vendor, and not to the recipient, do not count as income for SNAP recipients. This directive instructs VSOs on the process for making direct payments to said vendors when applicable, so SNAP beneficiaries are not adversely impacted by their Chapter 115 income.

Directive (Number N/A) VSAL 2012 Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvement Act of 2010 (May 8, 2012):

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvement Act of 2010 directive informs VSOs and municipalities that “break pay” or “interval pay” is no longer available under any VA education benefit. This directive goes on to authorize and direct VSOs to take, submit, and approve qualified student applications for Chapter 115 benefits for the periods when the reduction in VA benefits available under the GI Bill post-9/11 would adversely impact student veterans and veteran dependents.

Directive 12-01 Reimbursement Change for Budget #3 and #4 (July 27, 2012):

The Reimbursement Change for Budget #3 and #4 directive instructs VSOs on processing requests for authorization, for institutional and transitional housing residents. This directive also requires the community where the institution/transitional housing is physically located to process new requests for authorization. Communities with authorized Budget #3 and #4 residents will be reimbursed at one hundred percent (100%) by EOVS.

Directive 12-02 VASH Voucher First / Last and Security Deposit (July 27, 2012):

The VASH Voucher First/Last and Security Deposit directive informs VSOs that communities are required to provide the “First/Last and Security Deposit” to Chapter 115 recipients who have procured a VASH voucher and provides EOVS will reimburse communities at one hundred percent (100%) for first/last and security deposit payments.

Directive 19-01 Increase in Reasonable Maintenance Expense for Paying Mortgage and Mortgage-free Dwelling (May 21, 2019):

The Increase in Reasonable Maintenance Expense for Paying Mortgage and Mortgage-free Dwelling directive increased the amount of the so-called reasonable maintenance benefit from \$50 to \$100 per month. This benefit is payable to Chapter 115 recipients who own their own home.

Directive 21-04 Maximum Asset Allowance (June 4, 2021):

The Maximum Asset Allowance Directive increases the maximum assets a recipient of Chapter 115 is allowed to have on hand and maintain eligibility for Chapter 115 benefits. This increase was made to account for increases in cost of living and raised the maximum assets from \$5,000 to \$8,400 per individual and from \$9,800 to \$16,600 per recipient and dependent.

Legislative Recommendations

The HERO Act represented a generational investment in veterans services in Massachusetts. Over the course of the past year, EOVS has successfully implemented every provision of the most comprehensive legislation to benefit veterans in Massachusetts history, as confirmed through comprehensive internal tracking and inter-agency collaboration.

The HERO Act's implementation brought sweeping improvements across all pillars of support for veterans and their families:

Direct Benefit Enhancements:

The HERO Act delivered the most robust package of direct financial improvements to veterans in Massachusetts history. Among the most impactful:

- The annuity for 100% disabled veterans and gold star families was increased from \$2,000 to \$2,500 annually, the first such increase in over a decade.
- The Veterans Hire Tax Credit for small businesses was increased to \$2,500, with greater flexibility for certification. This will help reduce unemployment among veterans and incentivize hiring across the Commonwealth.
- Access to RMV-related fee exemptions was significantly expanded: veterans who are 100% service-connected disabled are now exempt from excise tax, driver's license fees, and vehicle registration fees.
- The Active-Duty Service Buyback program was extended from 180 days to 10 years, with expanded eligibility to include certain National Guard and Reservists, allowing more servicemembers to count their military time toward retirement.
- Municipalities were given authority to double property tax exemptions for veterans or index them to inflation, expanding local relief tools for aging or low-income veterans.
- Chapter 115 eligibility was protected from federal cost-of-living adjustments, ensuring that small increases in VA or Social Security benefits don't result in loss of state aid.
- Codified medical and dental benefits and increased the burial allowance, providing veterans and their families with a stronger safety net during moments of critical need.

Expanded Eligibility and Equity:

The HERO Act redefined the Ch. 115 definition of "veteran" to fully align with the United States Department of Veteran Affairs, eliminating outdated requirements and enabling access to benefits for veterans who were previously excluded, including members of the National Guard, Reserve components and those discharged under conditions later understood to be unjust, such as PTSD, MST, TBI, or HIV status. It also updated the definition of "dependent" to match family court standards and codified a uniform one-day residency rule for all applicants. These reforms dramatically widened eligibility for state support.

Behavioral Health and Crisis Diversion:

For the first time in the program's history, Chapter 115 was expanded to cover behavioral health services, allowing municipalities to reimburse for outpatient mental health care. This ensures that veterans facing mental health challenges, including those navigating trauma, reintegration, or substance use recovery, have access to treatment without financial hardship. Additionally, the

HERO Act created a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Commission and launched a study into alternative mental health therapies, including nontraditional and community-based approaches to healing.

Veterans Equality Review Board (VERB) Reform:

The HERO Act expanded VERB to consider a broader set of unjust discharge cases to now include those related to Military Sexual Trauma (MST), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and HIV status, as well as identity-based discrimination involving race, religion, or age. This reform advances a trauma-informed, restorative approach to veteran status restoration, reaffirming that all who served with honor deserve to be treated with dignity and fairness.

Support for Military Families:

The HERO Act introduced several new supports for veterans' families, including the creation of a Military Family Advocacy Program to address abuse on military installations, and mandates for public school districts to provide support to military-connected students when a parent or guardian is deployed.

Oversight and Transparency Improvements:

To ensure accountability and system-wide clarity, the HERO Act strengthened data collection and reporting mandates, codified the requirement for this Annual Report, and improved statutory oversight of veterans' benefit programs.

Having completed this full-scale implementation, EOVS is now shifting its legislative focus from execution to strategic evolution. The agency is actively engaging with Veterans Service Officers, veteran service organizations, state agencies, the Legislature, and veterans themselves to identify emerging needs, unresolved challenges, and innovative policy pathways.

EOVS is proud to have delivered on a historic mandate to elevate and transform how Massachusetts supports its veterans. The Commonwealth's veteran services infrastructure is now stronger, more inclusive, and better aligned with the realities facing today's servicemembers, veterans, and families. EOVS remains committed to advancing veterans benefits, support, and services in collaboration with its partners, ensuring that Massachusetts continues to lead the nation in honoring and empowering those who have served.