



AMERICAN LATINO
VETERANS ASSOCIATION

State of Latino Veterans 2025 – Full Report

Prepared by the American Latino Veterans Association (ALVA)

Survey Period: July–September 2025

Prepared: November 2025

Author's Note: Prepared by the ALVA Research & Policy Team in partnership with Veteran Serving Organizations (VSOs) across the United States.

This report is dedicated to the men and women whose service and voices guide our mission.

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1. Executive Summary

ALVA’s *State of Latino Veterans 2025* survey provides one of the clearest pictures yet of the Hispanic/Latino veteran population in the U.S.—its strengths, barriers, and opportunities. We surveyed 217 veterans nationwide between July and September 2025.

Highlights

- VA engagement: 81% enrolled; broad use of multiple programs.
- Discrimination: 54% experienced ethnic/racial discrimination while serving.
- Combat exposure: 57% served in combat zones; this group reports lower VA satisfaction.
- Health & housing: 51% report physical health issues; 10.6% experienced homelessness post-service.
- Entrepreneurship: 27% own a business; 35% wish to start one (capital is the top barrier).
- Community: 75% would join a Latino veterans association; 58% say connection is *very important*.

Latino veterans are resourceful and community-oriented yet face structural inequities in VA access, representation, and economic opportunity.

2. Methodology

Mode: Online survey (July–September 2025)

Population: Self-identified Latino/Hispanic U.S. veterans

Instrument: 32 questions (demographics, service, VA experience, health & socioeconomic factors, entrepreneurship, community connection) plus open-text prompts.

Analysis: Descriptive statistics and cross-tabs (age, gender, first-generation, combat service).

Qualitative coding of open responses.

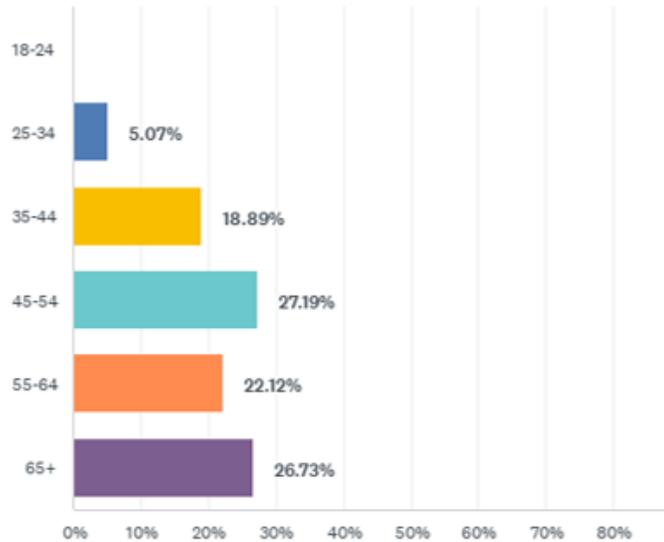
Limitations: Voluntary sample; self-report. Directional findings for policy/program design; not population estimates.

3. Respondent Profile (Q1–Q8)

Age Distribution (Q1)

Age Range % of Respondents

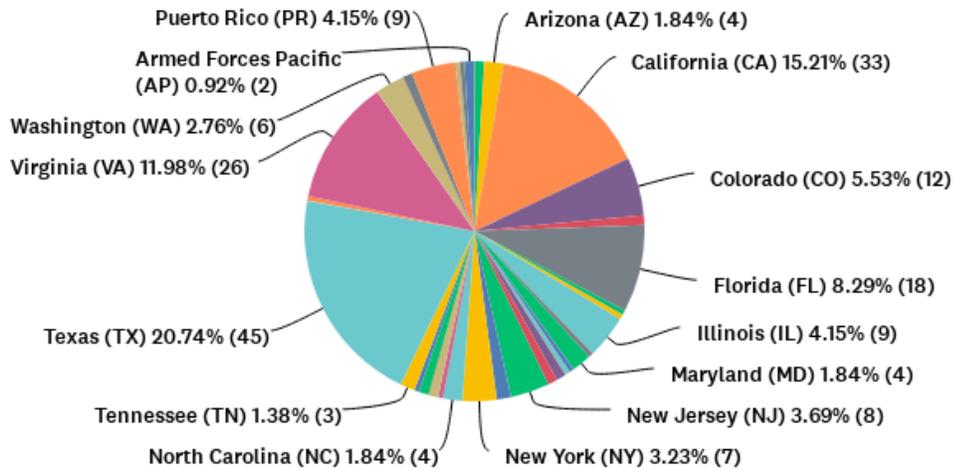
18–24	2.8
25–34	8.8
35–44	16.1
45–54	23.5
55–64	29.9
65–74	16.5
75+	2.4



[Figure 1 – Age Distribution]

Geographic Distribution (Q4)

State / Territory	%
California	22
Texas	19
Florida	9
New York	6
Virginia	5
All others + Puerto Rico	39

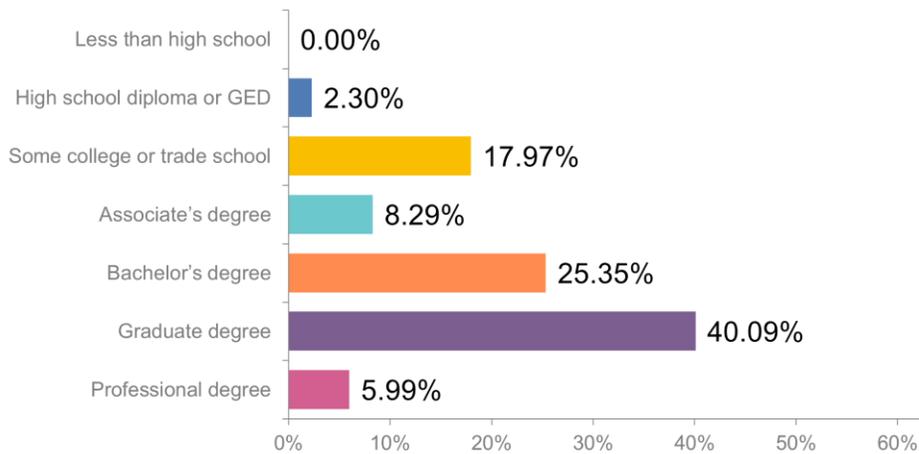


[Figure 2 – Respondents by State/Territory]

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Other Demographics

Variable	Key Findings
Gender	80% male · 20% female
Heritage	48% Mexican/Mexican American · 27% Puerto Rican · remainder other Latino origins
Primary Language	83% English · 14% Spanish · 3% Other
First-Generation	26% born outside the U.S.
Education	65% Bachelor’s+ (40% Graduate)
Household Income	≈33% < \$75k · 22% ≥ \$200k



[Figure 3 – Education and Income Distribution]

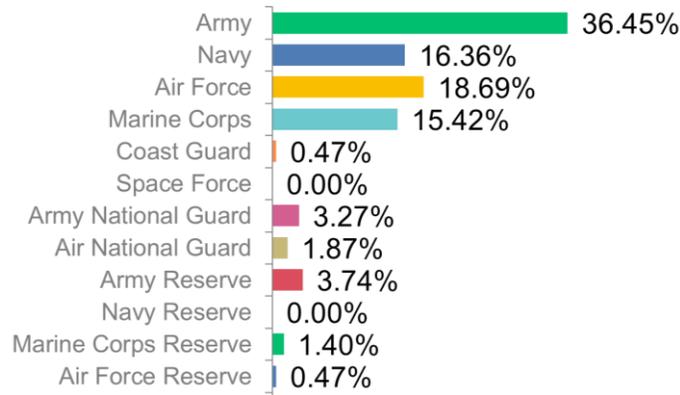
4. Military Service Experience (Q9–Q14)

Branch of Service	%
Army	36.45
Air Force	18.69

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Branch of Service	%
Navy	16.36
Marine Corps	15.42
Coast Guard	0.47
Other / Multiple Branches	12.61

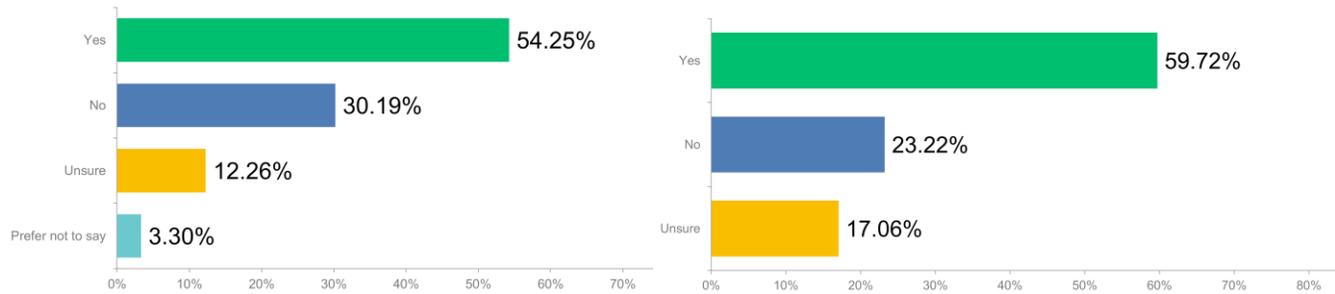
- Combat service: 57% served in combat zones.
- Highest rank: Majority E-4–E-6; 21% senior enlisted or commissioned officers.
- Length of service: 36% served 20+ years.



[Figure 4 – Branch of Service Distribution]

5. Discrimination & Community Recognition (Q15–Q16)

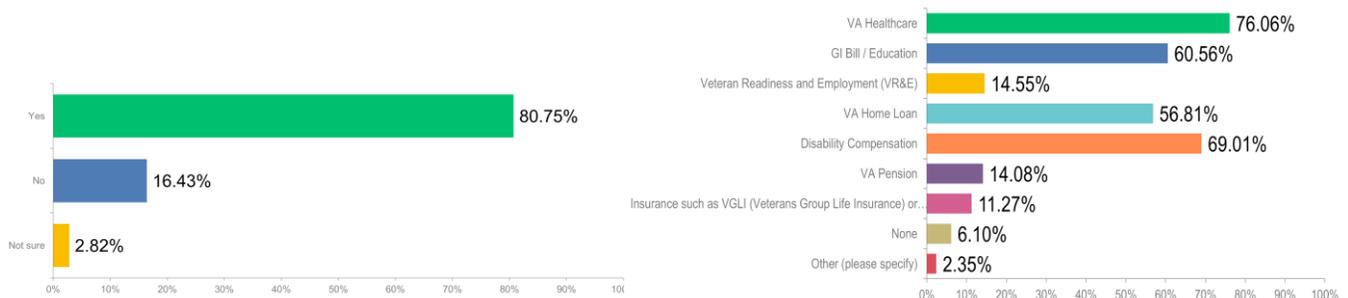
Indicator	Response
Experienced discrimination	54% Yes
Community recognizes service	60% Yes



[Figure 5 – Discrimination and Recognition Rates]

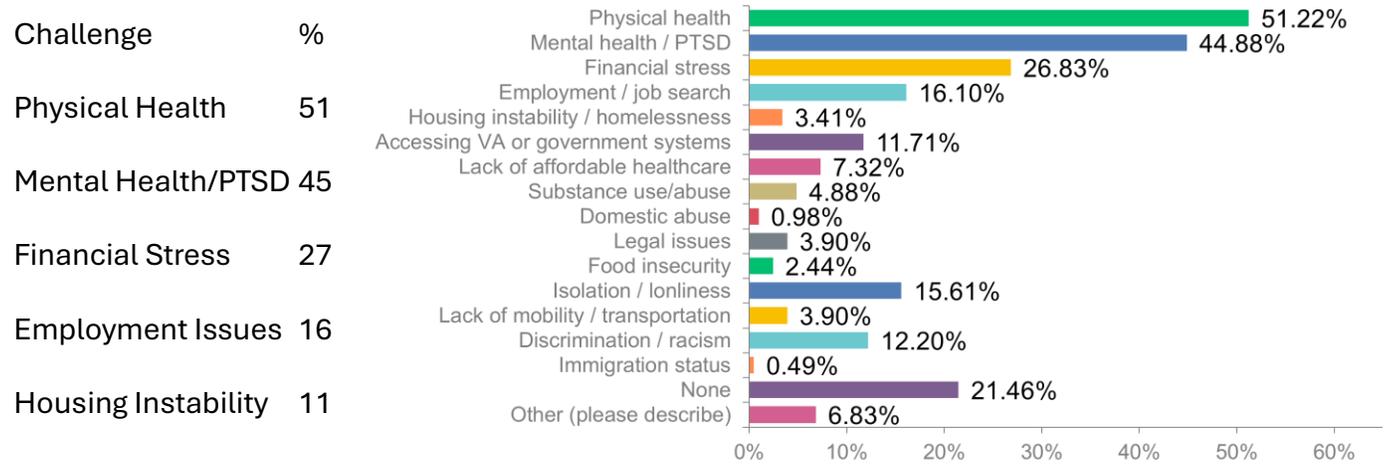
6. VA Enrollment, Benefits & Satisfaction (Q17–Q21)

Metric	Result
VA Healthcare Enrollment	81%
Most used benefits	Healthcare 76%; Disability 69%; GI Bill 61%; Home Loan 57
Overall Satisfaction	58% positive · 28% neutral · 14% negative
Language/Cultural Barriers	8%
Confidence navigating VA	23% very · 55% somewhat · 17% not · 5% unsure



[Figure 6 – VA Benefit Utilization & Satisfaction]

7. Health, Housing & Economic Challenges (Q22–Q28)

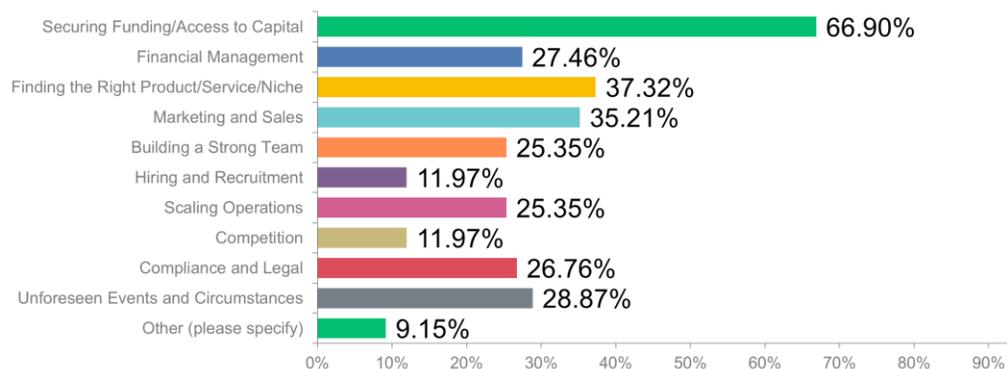


[Figure 7 – Health & Economic Challenges]

7a. Latino Veteran Entrepreneurship (Q25–Q27)

Indicator	% of Respondents
Own a business	27
Interested in starting one	35
Not interested	37
Maybe / unsure	8

Top barriers: Access to capital (67%), Marketing (35%), Financial management (27%), Competition (25%), Compliance (12%)



[Figure 8 – Business Ownership & Startup Interest]

Interpretation

Latino veterans display strong entrepreneurial ambition—over 60% are current or aspiring business owners. Capital access is the most cited barrier; respondents also note marketing and administrative challenges.

Themes from open responses

- “Access to business startup opportunities, capital and funding.”
- “Business, political, community and networking opportunities focused on changing the narrative for our Latino veterans.”
- “Degree credits for service time, skills, and life experiences—every vet should leave service with some credential!”

Policy implication

Establish a Latino Veterans Entrepreneurship Accelerator (VA–SBA–CDFI) to provide capital, mentorship, and procurement pathways.

8. Community, Identity & Connection (Q29–Q32)

- 58% say connecting with Latino veterans is *very important*.
- 75% would join a Latino veterans association.
- Top program interests: Workforce training 78%; Mental health 66%; Entrepreneurship 53%.

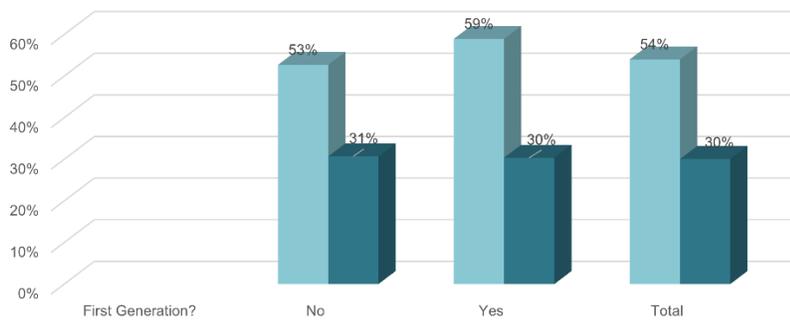


[Figure 9 – Program Interest Areas]

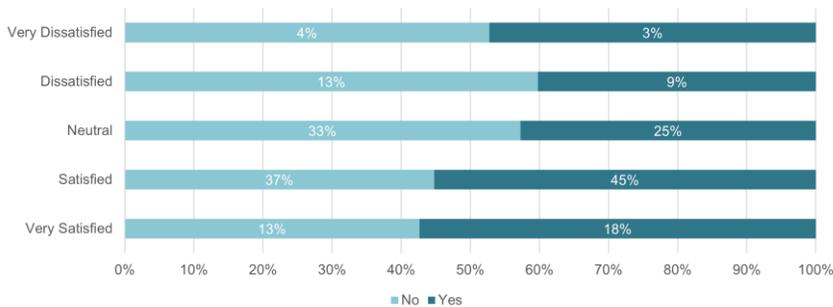
9. Correlation Insights

- Discrimination → Lower VA satisfaction
- Combat service → Higher VA use but lower satisfaction
- Education → Income & entrepreneurship
- First-generation/Spanish dominant → Navigation barriers
- Homelessness ↔ VA trust deficit

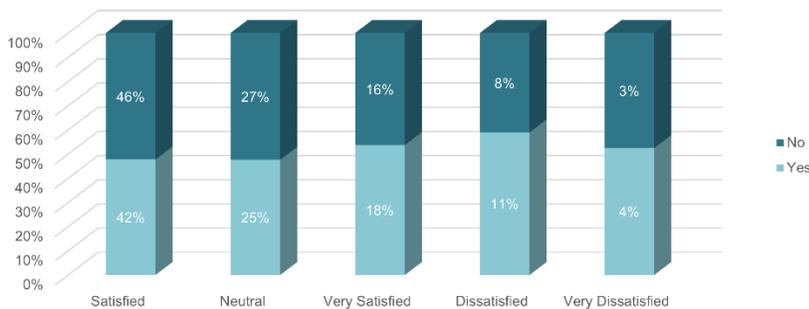
Do you feel your were discriminated against?



Combat and VA Satisfaction



Satisfaction and Discrimination



[Figure 10 – Correlation Heatmap]

10. Policy Recommendations

1. Bilingual Veteran Navigation Corps (community-embedded, VA-funded).
2. Combat Veteran Fast-Track (expedited claims + trauma-informed care).
3. Cultural Competency & Anti-Bias Certification (annual).
4. Homelessness Prevention & Mobile Health Hubs (with rural/underserved outreach).
5. Latino Veterans Entrepreneurship Accelerator (capital + mentorship + procurement).
6. Fast-Track Naturalization & Legal Aid (for first-gen veterans).
7. Community Representation & Mentorship (ALVA chapters).
8. Annual Latino Veterans Outcomes Dashboard (disaggregated metrics).

11. Implementation Roadmap & KPIs

Phase	Timeline	Priority Actions	Key Metrics
Short Term	0–12 mo	Pilot navigator teams; staff training	Caseload resolution; satisfaction delta; appeals time
Mid Term	12–36 mo	Scale navigators; launch accelerator	Processing time ↓; startups ↑; housing stability ↑
Long Term	36+ mo	Institutionalize programs; publish dashboard	Homelessness ↓; VA trust ↑; contracting wins ↑

12. Limitations & Future Research

Convenience sample limits generalization. Future work should oversample women and first-generation veterans and add longitudinal tracking plus administrative data linkage for equity metrics (denial rates, processing times, benefit utilization by language).

13. Conclusions

Latino veterans have served with distinction in every conflict, yet systemic inequities constrain access to opportunity. Representation, language accessibility, and cultural competence directly affect satisfaction, health, and stability.

Investing in bilingual navigation, entrepreneurship pathways, and data transparency will yield measurable equity gains.

ALVA urges Congress and the VA to act on these insights so that Latino veterans receive not only recognition for their service but full access to the benefits and prosperity they have earned.

Contact:

American Latino Veterans Association (ALVA)

 www.alvavets.org

 info@alvavets.org

Appendix A – Full Numeric Results (Q1–Q32) (Variable/Percentage)

Demographics

Q1. Age

18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
2.8	8.8	16.1	23.5	29.9	16.5	2.4

Q2. Gender identity

Male	Female
80.0	20.0

Q3. Hispanic/Latino background

Mexican/Mexican American	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Dominican	Salvadoran	Colombian	Spanish	Mixed/Other
48.0	26.7	1.4	4.1	1.8	2.3	1.4	14.3

Q4. State / U.S. territory

California	Texas	Florida	New York	Virginia	All others + Puerto Rico
22	19	9	6	5	39

Q5. Highest level of education

HS/GED or less	Some college/trade	Associate	Bachelor’s	Graduate/Professional
2.3	18.0	8.3	25.4	40.1

Q6. Primary language(s) at home

English	Spanish	Other
83.3	13.9	2.8

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Q7. First-generation American

Yes	No	Prefer not
25.9	70.8	3.3

Q8. Annual household income

< \$20k	\$20–49,999	\$50–74,999	\$75–99,999	\$100–149,999	\$150–199,999	≥ \$200k	Prefer not
2.3	6.5	12.0	14.8	18.5	13.9	22.2	9.7

Military Service Profile

Q9. Branch of service

Army	Air Force	Navy	Marine Corps	Coast Guard	Other/Multiple
36.45	18.69	16.36	15.42	0.47	12.61

Q10. Highest rank

E-1–E-3	E-4–E-6	E-7–E-9	O-1–O-3	O-4–O-5	O-6
5.21	46.92	18.48	4.74	12.80	8.53

Q11. Length of service

1–3 yrs	4–6 yrs	7–10 yrs	11–15 yrs	16–20 yrs	> 20 yrs
6.54	22.43	17.29	7.48	8.41	36.45

Q12. When did you serve? (check all that apply)

Vietnam	Desert Storm	Iraq/Afghanistan	Post-2014
8	19	52	21

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Q13. Served in a combat zone

Yes	No	Not applicable
57.48	39.25	3.27

Q14. Currently serving (Active/Guard/Reserves)

Active Duty	National Guard	Reserves	No
2.80	0.93	0.93	95.33

Discrimination & Recognition

Q15. Discriminated against based on race/ethnicity while serving

Yes	No	Unsure	Prefer not
54.25	30.19	12.26	3.30

Q16. Community recognizes and values your service

Yes	No	Unsure
59.72	23.22	17.06

VA Access & Experience

Q17. Enrolled in VA healthcare

Yes	No	Not sure
80.75	16.43	2.82

Q18. VA benefits used (check all that apply)

VA Healthcare	Disability Comp	GI Bill	VA Home Loan	VR&E	Pension	Insurance
76.06	69.01	60.56	56.81	14.55	14.08	11.27

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Q19. Rate your experience with the VA

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
15.79	41.63	28.23	11.00	3.35

Q20. Faced language/cultural misunderstandings when accessing VA

Yes	No	N/A
8.06	84.36	7.58

Q21. Confidence navigating the VA system

Very	Somewhat	Not confident	Unsure
23.44	54.55	16.75	5.26

Socioeconomic & Well-Being

Q22. Other challenges accessing VA benefits: (Open-ended; see Appendix B for detail.)

Q23. Employment status

Full-time	Part-time	Unemployed	Retired	Student	Other
43.33	7.62	7.14	31.43	2.38	8.10

Q24. Current challenges (check all that apply)

Physical health	Mental health/PTSD	Financial stress	Employment	Housing	Isolation	Discrimination	Immigration	None
51.22	44.88	26.83	16.10	11.71	12.20	3.90	0.49	21.46

Q25. Own your own business

Yes	No
27.14	72.86

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Q26. Interested in starting a business

Yes	No	Maybe	Unsure
35.44	36.89	19.42	8.25

Q27. Main concerns (owners or interested in starting)

Funding	Product/Market	Marketing	Financial Mgmt	Hiring	Competition	Scaling	Compliance	Unforeseen Events
66.90	37.32	35.21	27.46	25.35	25.35	11.97	11.97	26.76

Q28. Experienced homelessness since leaving the military

Yes	No	Prefer not
10.63	87.44	1.93

Community & Connection

Q29. Interest in resources

Workforce training	Job placement	Mental health	Entrepreneurship
78.28	64.74	65.99	52.53

Q30. Importance of connecting with Latino/Hispanic veterans

Very	Somewhat	Not important
57.77	35.44	6.80

Q31. Would you participate in a Latino veterans association?

Yes	Maybe	No
74.63	21.95	3.41

Q32. Other support desired: (Open-ended; see Appendix B.)

Appendix B – Verbatim Open-Ended Responses (Samples)

Q22 & Q20 – Other challenges in accessing VA benefits

- “The VA is too slow. Currently waiting over 18 months for a VA hearing.”
- “If you don’t say or write exactly the right thing the VA denies legitimate claims—it’s pushing veterans to hire attorneys to get earned benefits.”
- “Complexity in navigation. A lack of care by staff.”
- “Racial profiling, lazy doctors and staff.”
- “Red tape, misinformation, employees afraid for their jobs.”
- “They seem bureaucratic and will not go out of their way to help you. My experience is they prefer to deny benefits rather than make them easy to obtain.”
- “Applying for benefits is very time-consuming and the overall process is overly bureaucratic.”
- “I put in for benefits in 1970; it took until 2006 to get any benefits.”
- “Professionals who lack understanding of disabilities, especially severe chronic pain.”
- “Inconsistent responses from staff members.”
- “Lacking computer skills when trying to use VA website.”
- “Getting my disability processed is a nightmare.”
- “Hard system to navigate — no wonder many vets can’t get help.”
- “I have had several issues with the VA, from rude and careless healthcare professionals to poor customer service from the VBA.”
- “I was told that because I know Spanish as my first language, my TBI symptoms were related to that.”
- “I can’t seem to get through the process of getting VA healthcare or other services.”
- “Very confusing on how to get started and move forward with it.”
- “Time it takes to process anything.”
- “I don’t always feel they pay attention to what I’m saying or explaining.”
- “Have to wait a long time for an appointment with my doctor.”

Q32 – Other support desired as a Latino/Hispanic veteran

- “I would like to see more events where Latino veterans can come together and support each other.”
- “Would like to ensure our women veterans are protected from sexual violence in the ranks.”
- “Networking with foreign militaries that speak Spanish.”
- “Up-to-date information pertinent to me.”
- “Having opportunities to connect within our specific community.”
- “Access to business startup opportunities, capital and funding.”
- “Human connection.”

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“Business, political, community and networking opportunities focused on changing the narrative for our Latino veterans.”

“To be a part of an organization that moves us to the forefront as a people setting the standard for leadership in politics, business, education, advocacy, science, health and more.”

“Support with securing funding for a startup business.”

“To be informed of any benefits or resources for veterans.”

“Fast-track citizenship for non-U.S.-citizen veterans.”

“I would like to provide support as well as have a community of Latinos to share with.”

“Parenting and being supportive (marriage counseling) of my Latino spouse who’s currently serving.”

“Degree credits for service time, skills, and life experiences—every vet should leave service with some credential!”

“Information on what is available for veterans.”

“Interested in AI (LLM) training for intelligence professionals.”

“Veteran civil rights.”

“Job placement assistance.”

Appendix C – Methods & Replicability Notes

Instrument: 32-item mixed-format survey (single/multi-choice + free text).

Recruitment: ALVA networks, partner VSOs, and social media.

Data handling: De-identified analysis dataset compiled from raw responses; multi-select items coded as binary flags.

Suggested analyses (if extending): Chi-square tests for association; logistic/ordinal regression for satisfaction and navigation confidence; segmentation for high-need vs. entrepreneurial cohorts.

Equity metrics (future linkage): Denial/appeal rates, time-to-decision, utilization by race/ethnicity/language.