



**Policy Brief for the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**2025 “State of Latino Veterans” Survey**  
**Prepared by the American Latino Veterans Association (ALVA)**  
**Date:** October 2025

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### Executive Summary

Latino veterans are among the fastest-growing segments of the U.S. veteran population—representing approximately 8.7% of all veterans today and projected to reach 14.3% by 2050. The *State of Latino Veterans 2025 Survey*, conducted by ALVA between July and September 2025 (N=217), provides new insight into the experiences, needs, and priorities of Hispanic and Latino veterans nationwide.

The findings reveal a **highly educated, service-oriented, and entrepreneurial community**, yet one that continues to face **disproportionate barriers in accessing VA benefits, economic mobility, and culturally competent care**. Despite high VA enrollment (81%), more than half reported discrimination during military service, and over one in ten experienced homelessness after separation.

The data underscore a clear message: **Latino veterans are proud to serve, but the systems meant to support them still struggle to fully serve them.**

### Key Findings and Correlations

#### 1. Discrimination and Institutional Trust

- **54%** of Latino veterans reported discrimination based on race or ethnicity during service.
- Those who reported discrimination were **twice as likely to rate their VA experience as “dissatisfied.”**
- **First-generation** Latino veterans (born outside the U.S.) experienced higher

discrimination rates (59%) than U.S.-born peers (53%).

*Interpretation:*

Discrimination in service erodes institutional trust and carries forward into lower engagement and satisfaction with VA services. Addressing bias and ensuring cultural competency are essential to rebuilding trust.

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## 2. Combat Exposure and VA Satisfaction

- **57%** served in combat zones. Combat veterans were more likely to rely on VA services—but less satisfied with them.
- Many cited bureaucratic delays, confusing claims processes, and poor customer service in open responses.

### *Interpretation:*

Combat veterans bear higher physical and psychological burdens but face the most friction in benefit access. Targeted reforms for this subgroup could significantly improve outcomes.

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## 3. Economic Resilience and Entrepreneurship

- **27%** of Latino veterans own a business; **35%** want to start one.
- Main barriers: Access to capital (67%), financial management (37%), and marketing (35%).
- **Higher education strongly correlates with higher income**, but underemployment remains an issue.

### *Interpretation:*

Entrepreneurship is both an opportunity and necessity. Latino veterans are leveraging their discipline and training but lack equitable access to financing and federal contracting opportunities.

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## 4. Health, Housing, and Mental Well-being

- Top challenges: physical health (51%), mental health/PTSD (45%), and financial stress (27%).
- **10.6%** have experienced homelessness since separation.
- **81%** enrolled in VA healthcare, but only **58%** report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied.”

### *Interpretation:*

Enrollment does not guarantee effective care. Delays, poor communication, and cultural misunderstandings reduce treatment efficacy and increase risk of housing instability.

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## 5. Cultural Identity and Connection

- **58%** said connecting with other Latino veterans is “very important.”
- **75%** would participate in a Latino Veterans Association.
- Open-ended responses highlight a need for **community, mentorship, and representation**.

### *Interpretation:*

Connection and belonging are protective factors. Latino veterans seek both peer community and a stronger cultural presence within the broader veterans’ system.

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## Policy Recommendations

### 1. Improve Access and Navigation at the VA

- **Establish a Bilingual Veteran Navigation Corps** within the VA—Spanish/English-trained case managers to assist with claims, appeals, and care coordination.
- **Create a Combat Veteran Fast-Track Lane** for disability claims and mental health services.
- **Publish transparency metrics** on VA claim processing times and satisfaction by demographic group.

### 2. Address Discrimination and Strengthen Cultural Competency

- Mandate **anti-bias and cultural competency training** for all VA and VBA personnel.
- Establish an **independent VA Equity Ombudsman Office** to investigate complaints and monitor trends.
- Expand data disaggregation by race, ethnicity, and language in VA systems.

### 3. Prevent Homelessness and Strengthen Integrated Health

- Fund **Transitional Housing Navigator Programs** that identify at-risk veterans before discharge.
- Develop **integrated mental health and primary care hubs** in Latino-majority regions, including family and domestic violence services.
- Pilot **mobile VA units** for rural and underserved areas.

### 4. Promote Entrepreneurship and Economic Mobility

- Launch a **Latino Veterans Entrepreneurship Accelerator**—seed grants, microloans, and business mentorship programs through SBA and CDFIs.
- Require federal agencies to set **Latino veteran small business contracting goals** within existing veteran procurement programs.
- Implement **credentialing and education credit conversion** to align military experience with civilian certifications.

### 5. Legal and Immigration Support

- Enact **expedited naturalization pathways** for non-citizen veterans and their families.
- Fund legal aid for immigration-related benefit issues.
- Coordinate with DHS and VA to prevent deportation of non-citizen veterans with honorable service.

## 6. Community Representation and Data Accountability

- Provide grants for **regional ALVA chapters** to deliver mentorship, advocacy, and peer support.
- Support a **national “Latino Veterans Legacy & Leadership” campaign** highlighting Latino contributions to U.S. military history.
- Require the VA to publish an **Annual Latino Veterans Outcomes Dashboard** tracking equity metrics.

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## Conclusion

Latino veterans have served this nation in every major conflict since its founding—often with valor unrecognized and voices unheard.

The *State of Latino Veterans 2025* survey provides both a warning and an opportunity: to reform systems that too often exclude, and to invest in a generation of veterans poised to lead, innovate, and serve again—this time, in building stronger communities.

**Congress and the Administration can act now** by:

- Funding navigation, housing, and entrepreneurship pilots;
- Expanding bilingual access and cultural training; and
- Requiring transparent, disaggregated VA data to ensure equity and accountability.

ALVA stands ready to partner with Congress, VA, and the veteran community to turn these findings into measurable progress.

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