

Accessibility and Effectiveness of Social Benefits and Services for War Veterans: Challenges, Barriers, and Opportunities

Report on the Results of a Comprehensive Study
conducted within the framework of the project
“Promoting Social Cohesion and the Reintegration
of Veterans in Ukraine”, funded by the European Union,
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About the International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Ukraine was established in 1996, when Ukraine became an IOM Observer State. In 2001, Ukraine applied for IOM membership, which was formalized in 2002 following the ratification of the IOM Constitution by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. In line with IOM's overall strategy, the activities of the IOM Mission in Ukraine are aimed at promoting awareness of migration opportunities and challenges in the Ukrainian context. Maximizing the benefits of migration while minimizing the challenges associated with population movements are the guiding principles of all activities and programmes implemented by the Mission.

The IOM Mission in Ukraine provides assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and war-affected populations, combats trafficking in human beings, supports the Government in addressing irregular migration and improving migration management systems, develops migrant-sensitive health policies, and contributes to harnessing the development potential of migration.

Since the onset of the full-scale war in Ukraine, from February 2022 to October 2025, IOM has provided humanitarian assistance to over 8 million people. This support includes the provision of non-food items and hygiene supplies; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions; multi-purpose cash assistance; healthcare services and mental health and psychosocial support; assistance to collective centres; protection services and other forms of aid.

Since 2018, IOM has been implementing and expanding programmes aimed at the socio-economic support of war veterans and their family members. IOM works in partnership with national and local stakeholders to develop and implement evidence-based, long-term solutions to address the challenges faced by war veterans, their families, and families of the fallen. Successful reintegration of war veterans is a key factor in ensuring national security, social stability, and sustainable economic development in Ukraine.

Building on long-standing partnerships with government institutions, regional state administrations, local authorities and non-governmental organizations, IOM provides targeted support to strengthen the resilience of Ukrainian communities.

About the Sociological Group “Rating”: The Sociological Group “Rating” is one of the largest non-governmental and independent research institutions in Ukraine, founded in 2008. The company specializes in conducting all types of sociological research, adhering to international standards established by the ESOMAR and WAPOR codes. It is a permanent member of the Sociological Association of Ukraine (SAU) and the International Sociological Association (ISA), and holds corporate membership in ESOMAR and WAPOR.

Disclaimer: Terms used in this document that have gender-specific meaning are applied in a gender-neutral manner and refer equally to persons of all genders.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ATO/JFO – Anti-Terrorist Operation (conducted from 2014 to 2018), Joint Forces Operation (replaced the ATO in 2018).

IDPs – Internally Displaced Persons

CSOs – Civil Society Organizations

EU – European Union

Ministry of Veterans Affairs – Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine

IOM – International Organization for Migration

UN – United Nations

PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

UBD – Participant in Hostilities (Ukraine)

Case Management Specialists – War Veterans and Demobilized Persons Case Management Specialists

ASC – Administrative Services Centre

INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of the ongoing war, alongside the growing number of veterans returning to civilian life – the needs and challenges of their reintegration into civilian life are also increasing. This requires systematic support and comprehensive solutions at both the national and local levels, within communities. The International Organization for Migration plays a key role in supporting the reintegration of war veterans in Ukraine.

Given projections that the number of war veterans and affected members of their families may reach five million, IOM has been contributing to strengthening the resilience of Ukrainian communities, including through socio-economic programmes for war veterans and their family members. Within these programmes, war veterans in civilian life are viewed not only as a key component of future socio-economic development, but also as important actors in resolving local conflicts, fostering community cohesion, and reducing the likelihood of future displacement.

IOM programmes are community-oriented and contribute to long-term social cohesion, economic recovery, and national stability. They build on previous experience and IOM's own evidence base developed through continuous data collection, sustained partnerships with government authorities, local administrations, and the civil society sector, and are aligned with state policy priorities in the field of war veterans' support.

In 2024, the Government of Ukraine adopted the Strategy for Veterans Policy until 2030, which defines key strategic objectives, including the restoration of human capital, provision of social guarantees, access to services, education and employment, and commemoration of fallen Defenders. The implementation of this Strategy requires a thorough analysis of the needs of war veterans, the state of service accessibility, integration barriers, and the effectiveness of interaction between national and local institutions.

In this context, with the support of the EU, IOM has been implementing a project aimed at strengthening social cohesion and the reintegration of war veterans through evidence-based approaches from September 2024 to February 2026. One of the key components of the project was the conduct of a nationwide survey, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and with the involvement of the Sociological Group "Rating" from September to November 2025. The objective of the study is to identify factors that facilitate or hinder the social integration of war veterans, as well as to assess their experience of interaction with the existing system of social service provision, including through ASC, as indicators of the implementation status of the Strategy for Veterans Policy in Ukraine.

The survey covered war veterans from various demographic groups, including persons with disabilities, as well as ASC staff from all Government-controlled regions of Ukraine. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with war veterans, Case Management Specialists, representatives of CSOs, and opinion leaders whose activities are directly related to the development of veteran's policy. The data obtained make it possible to analyze the extent to which the current infrastructure, service delivery mechanisms, and state guarantees correspond to the objectives of the Strategy for Veterans Policy.

The results presented in this report allow for a comprehensive assessment of the needs of war veterans, the barriers they face in accessing medical, social, and legal services, the situation regarding the implementation of housing programmes, and access to legal assistance. Based on the study, recommendations have been formulated that may serve as a basis for further improvement of public policy, enhancement of service effectiveness, and strengthening the role of war veterans in community development.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study primarily focuses on overall assessments, experiences of accessing benefits and services through ASC and other institutions, housing provision for war veterans, access to legal assistance, as well as the state of implementation of the Strategy for Veterans Policy.

Overall, the study findings indicate that:

- The main challenges faced by war veterans when returning to civilian life are related to a lack of understanding from society, difficulties in accessing social benefits, employment challenges, and limited access to medical and psychological support.
- The implementation of state policy in the field of veterans' benefits and services is generally assessed as low due to bureaucracy, insufficient funding, and weak coordination among public authorities.
- Medical services, particularly primary healthcare, receive relatively positive assessments, while psychological support and social services – including family support and the development of veteran entrepreneurship – remain underdeveloped.
- War veterans actively use ASC services and positively assess the professionalism of staff, however, bureaucratic procedures and the complexity of documentation hinder access to benefits.
- Housing programmes and legal support are constrained by limited resources and complex procedures, indicating the need for simplification and standardization.
- Despite these challenges, there are positive trends in the accessibility of medical services, the development of veteran hubs, rehabilitation programmes, and grant initiatives.
- The key needs identified by war veterans relate to medical care, psychological support, housing provision, legal assistance, and opportunities for employment and education.
- It is recommended to simplify the benefits system, automate processes, enhance the competence and empathy of service providers, and shift the focus from financial assistance towards initiatives supporting development and self-realization of war veterans.
- In the medium to long term, improvements are expected in the accessibility and quality of services, expansion of housing and social programmes, and integration of all services for war veterans within a single service environment.
- An important factor for the effective implementation of veterans policy is the active participation of war veterans themselves in communities and CSO initiatives, which contributes to their social integration and the development of their potential.

Based on the study, a set of recommendations was proposed to comprehensively improve the system of support for war veterans. The key areas include simplifying bureaucratic procedures, expanding and integrating digital services, strengthening housing programmes, and further developing medical, psychological, and social services for war veterans and their families. Particular emphasis is placed on the need for improved legal support, free legal consultations, and clear, accessible information materials on rights and available programmes.

METHODOLOGY

Between September and November 2025, a survey was conducted among 200 war veterans and 200 ASC staff. In addition, 42 in-depth interviews were carried out with key informants, including:

- 10 war veterans from different demographic groups (including persons with disabilities),
- 10 Case Management Specialists working with war veterans and demobilized persons,
- 10 representatives of CSOs operating in the areas of benefits, social guarantees, and housing provision,
- 12 opinion leaders whose activities are related to supporting war veterans and shaping relevant public policy¹.

To assess the quality and effectiveness of medical and social services, as well as the mechanisms for accessing benefits and services through ASC, specific evaluation criteria were developed. A standardized scoring methodology was applied using a points-based scale. War veteran respondents were asked to assess a set of predefined criteria reflecting various aspects of service quality, awareness, ease of application, and overall effectiveness. Assessments were conducted using a five-point scale, where 1 indicated “very poor” and 5 indicated “very good”. Following data collection, all individual assessments were cleaned of technical errors and missing values in accordance with standard sociological data preparation procedures. For each criterion, an arithmetic mean was calculated, allowing for the generation of aggregated indicators for the quality of specific types of services. Based on these mean values, integrated indices were developed to assess medical and social support services, as well as their accessibility and effectiveness.

This approach ensured comparability of indicators across different service groups, enabled the identification of strengths and weaknesses within the war veterans support system, and provided a basis for formulating analytical conclusions and recommendations aimed at the further improvement of state policy.

Methodology of the Quantitative Survey

Data Collection

For the quantitative stage of the study, the method of face-to-face structured interviews using tablets was applied – CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing). The survey questionnaires were developed and approved by the IOM Mission in Ukraine and representatives of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs. The tools were tested during a pilot survey conducted on 26-28 August 2025, after which minor adjustments were introduced. The final version of the questionnaire for war veterans included 98 questions, of which 12 were demographic. The questionnaire for ASC staff consisted of 61 questions, including 6 demographic questions. The questionnaires were programmed using CATI software. Within the framework of this project, back-translation was not conducted. The fieldwork stage was implemented using EPOLL© software. Upon completion of each interview, the data were automatically transmitted to a central server and stored in the appropriate format.

The survey covered all regions of Ukraine where the security situation allowed for the conduct of face-to-face interviews. The geographical scope of the study included four macro-regions:

- **Western:** Lviv, Volyn, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Zakarpattia, and Chernivtsi regions;
- **Central:** Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, and Poltava regions, as well as the city of Kyiv;

¹ During the study, the quota of "Public opinion leaders, experts" was increased from 10 to 12 people.

- **Frontline:** Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and Kherson regions (within Government-controlled areas, up to 30 km from the line of contact at the time of the survey);
- **Border:** Sumy, Chernihiv, Mykolaiv, and Odesa regions.

The survey was not conducted in Luhansk and Donetsk regions due to significant risks to the life and health of interviewers.

The sample consisted of the following population categories:

- **War veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2025** who hold the status of UBD, have been discharged from the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and are not engaged in active hostilities. The total number of respondents in this group was **200**. The sample included 15% women veterans and 25% persons with disabilities resulting from the war.
- **Representatives of administrative service providers (ASC).** The total number of respondents in this group was **200**.

Sample Description

The sample distribution for both target groups was based on an approximate allocation according to population size in each region, as well as by type of settlement. Within the category of war veterans, mandatory inclusion of women veterans and persons with disabilities resulting from the war was ensured in each region. The established quotas were fulfilled at 100 per cent (Table 1).

Table 1

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION FOR THE CATEGORY OF WAR VETERANS

Region	Total	Of which women	Of which persons with disabilities	Regional centre	Other cities	Rural areas
Vinnitsia	9	1	2	5	3	1
Volyn	8	1	2	4	3	1
Dnipropetrovsk	10	2	3	6	3	1
Zhytomyr	8	1	2	4	3	1
Zakarpattia	8	1	2	4	3	1
Zaporizhzhia	6	0	1	6	0	0
Ivano-Frankivsk	9	1	2	5	3	1
Kyiv	10	3	3	6	3	1
Kirovohrad	8	1	2	4	3	1
Lviv	10	2	3	6	3	1
Mykolaiv	8	1	2	4	3	1
Odesa	10	2	3	6	3	1
Poltava	9	1	2	5	3	1
Rivne	8	1	2	4	3	1
Sumy	8	1	2	4	3	1

Ternopil	8	1	2	4	3	1
Kharkiv	10	2	3	6	3	1
Kherson	6	0	1	6	0	0
Khmelnyskyi	9	1	2	5	3	1
Cherkasy	8	1	2	4	3	1
Chernivtsi	8	1	2	4	3	1
Chernihiv	8	1	2	4	3	1
Kyiv city	14	4	3	14	-	-
TOTAL	200	30	50	120	60	20

Within the category of ASC representatives, according to the survey results, 45 per cent of respondents were interviewed in regional centres, 49.5 per cent in other cities, and 5.5 per cent in rural areas. Women accounted for 94 per cent of the surveyed ASC staff. Due to the insufficient number of ASCs in some regional centres, the sample was adjusted in favour of other cities or rural settlements within the respective region. Final results by type of settlement are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION FOR THE CATEGORY OF REPRESENTATIVES OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES CENTRES (ASC)

Region	Total	Of which women	Regional centre	Other cities	Rural areas
Vinnitsia	9	7	4	5	0
Volyn	8	7	4	4	0
Dnipropetrovsk	10	10	4	6	0
Zhytomyr	8	8	3	5	0
Zakarpattia	8	6	4	4	0
Zaporizhzhia	8	8	8	0	0
Ivano-Frankivsk	8	7	4	4	0
Kyiv	10	10	0	10	0
Kirovohrad	8	7	3	3	2
Lviv	10	10	6	4	0
Mykolaiv	8	8	4	4	0
Odesa	10	10	2	5	3
Poltava	9	8	5	4	0
Rivne	8	8	4	4	0
Sumy	8	8	2	6	0
Ternopil	8	7	4	4	0

Kharkiv	10	10	2	6	2
Kherson	8	7	2	4	2
Khmelnyskyi	8	8	4	4	0
Cherkasy	8	8	3	5	0
Chernivtsi	8	6	4	4	0
Chernihiv	8	8	2	4	2
Kyiv city	12	12	12	0	0
TOTAL	200	188	90	99	11

Fieldwork and Quality Control

Prior to the start of fieldwork, a training session was conducted for interviewers and supervisors from all regions of Ukraine. The training covered approaches to interviewing war veterans and persons with disabilities, representatives of local self-government bodies and administrative services, as well as IOM policies, including personal data protection and confidentiality.

The quantitative survey required obtaining verbal consent from respondents prior to the start of the interview. Participation was entirely voluntary, with respondents having the right to discontinue the interview at any time without providing a reason. All information collected during the survey was processed confidentially and used exclusively in aggregated form.

In total, 61 interviewers were engaged in the fieldwork. All interviewers had at least a completed secondary education and prior experience in conducting face-to-face interviews for a minimum of six months. Approximately 92 per cent of interviewers were women.

Fieldwork was conducted from **27 September to 7 October 2025**. The average duration of interviews with war veterans was 21 minutes and 54 seconds, while interviews with ASC representatives lasted an average of 16 minutes and 38 seconds. In addition to interviewers, the field team included 22 regional supervisors and one field manager. Data quality control was carried out at both technical and procedural levels using EPOLL© software. At the procedural level, data quality was ensured through monitoring of tablet GPS location and interview duration. Additionally, up to 10 per cent of interviews were subject to supplementary audio monitoring to identify any omissions or logical inconsistencies. Based on the audit results, no errors or violations were identified during the interviews. Summary data on fieldwork performance are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

	War Veterans	ASC
Fieldwork dates	23.09-07.10	23.09-07.10
Regional managers	22	22
Interviewers	51	61
Average interview duration	21:54	16:38

Despite the limitations caused by ongoing hostilities and recruitment challenges for ASC staff in certain regions, the response rate for both respondent categories was optimal and comparable to indicators observed in similar studies involving these target groups (Tables 4-5).

Table 4

REACHABILITY COEFFICIENT: WAR VETERANS					
War veterans	Completed interview	Incomplete interview	Refusal	Total	Reachability coefficient
Vinnytsia	9	0	2	11	81,8%
Volyn	8	0	1	9	88,9%
Dnipropetrovsk	10	2	3	15	66,7%
Zhytomyr	9	1	1	11	81,8%
Zakarpathia	8	0	3	11	72,7%
Zaporizhzhia	6	0	0	6	100,0%
Ivano-Frankivsk	9	2	1	12	75,0%
Kyiv	10	2	3	15	66,7%
Kirovohrad	8	0	1	9	88,9%
Lviv	10	1	3	14	71,4%
Mykolaiv	8	1	0	9	88,9%
Odesa	10	3	0	13	76,9%
Poltava	9	0	1	10	90,0%
Rivne	8	0	1	9	88,9%
Sumy	8	0	2	10	80,0%
Ternopil	8	1	1	10	80,0%
Kharkiv	10	1	2	13	76,9%
Kherson	6	0	2	8	75,0%
Khmelnytskyi	9	0	1	10	90,0%
Cherkasy	8	0	0	8	100,0%
Chernivtsi	8	0	0	8	100,0%
Chernihiv	8	0	1	9	88,9%
Kyiv city	14	2	2	18	77,8%
Total	201	16	31	248	81,0%

Table 5

REACHABILITY COEFFICIENT: ASC STAFF					
ASC	Completed interview	Incomplete interview	Refusal	Total	Reachability coefficient
Vinnytsia	9	1	1	11	81,8%
Volyn	8	3	0	11	72,7%
Dnipropetrovsk	10	1	2	13	76,9%
Zhytomyr	8	0	1	9	88,9%

Zakarpattia	8	2	0	10	80,0%
Zaporizhzhia	8	0	0	8	100,0%
Ivano-Frankivsk	8	2	0	10	80,0%
Kyiv	10	1	0	11	90,9%
Kirovohrad	8	1	1	10	80,0%
Lviv	10	3	0	13	76,9%
Mykolaiv	8	1	0	9	88,9%
Odesa	10	1	4	15	66,7%
Poltava	9	0	0	9	100,0%
Rivne	8	2	0	10	80,0%
Sumy	8	0	2	10	80,0%
Ternopil	8	2	0	10	80,0%
Kharkiv	10	0	4	14	71,4%
Kherson	8	2	2	12	66,7%
Khmelnytskyi	8	1	0	9	88,9%
Cherkasy	8	1	1	10	80,0%
Chernivtsi	8	1	0	9	88,9%
Chernihiv	8	0	2	10	80,0%
Kyiv city	12	1	0	13	92,3%
Total	200	26	20	246	81,3%

Primary survey results were uploaded and stored in .sav format. For further processing and report preparation, the raw data were converted into Excel format. No weighting of results was applied.

Methodology of the Qualitative Study

Sample and Geographic Coverage

Within the qualitative phase of the study, **42 in-depth interviews** were conducted, including 10 respondents in each of the following three target categories:

- **War veterans** from different demographic groups, including persons with disabilities, residing in Government-controlled areas of Ukraine.
- **Case Management Specialists working with war veterans and demobilized persons (hereinafter referred to as Case Management Specialists)**. Following the pre-test and consultations with IOM and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, the quota was adjusted from representatives of local self-government bodies and ASCs directly involved in service provision for war veterans.

- **Representatives of CSOs** operating in the areas of benefits, social guarantees, and housing provision for war veterans.

The quota for **national-level opinion leaders whose activities are directly related to supporting war veterans and shaping public policy in this field** was expanded to 12 respondents due to the high level of interest in participation among representatives of local authorities.

To ensure regional balance, a macro-regional principle was applied. Within each target group, two respondents were selected from each of the five macro-regions:

- **Western:** Lviv, Volyn, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Zakarpattia, and Chernivtsi regions;
- **Central:** Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, and Poltava regions;
- **Frontline:** Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and Kherson regions (within Government-controlled areas, up to 30 km from the line of contact at the time of the survey);
- **Border:** Sumy, Chernihiv, Mykolaiv, and Odesa regions.
- **City of Kyiv** as a separate notional territorial unit due to the concentration of institutions, organizations, and specific target dynamics.

This approach made it possible to collect regionally balanced, thematically relevant, and socially diverse data on the challenges and barriers faced by war veterans, while also capturing a range of perspectives from government, civil society, and expert stakeholders. The average age of participants in the qualitative phase was 41.6 years. In total, 19 men and 23 women were interviewed.

Data Collection and Respondent Recruitment.

In-depth interviews were conducted using a mixed format – online (via Zoom or telephone) or offline (face-to-face) – depending on the respondent category, technical connectivity, and the prevailing security situation in the region. The interview format was determined individually for each respondent, taking into account:

- access to stable internet or mobile communication;
- the respondent's personal preferences regarding the format of interaction;
- logistical and security constraints in the specific region.

Interviews were conducted using structured interview guides developed and approved by IOM and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs. The interviews covered key thematic areas aimed at collecting detailed assessments and experiences related to accessing and/or providing social benefits and services for war veterans. Prior to each interview, respondents provided informed consent to participate and permission for audio and/or video recording. Respondent recruitment was carried out through Rating Group's extensive network of regional recruiters covering all regions of Ukraine. The following recruitment methods were applied:

- proprietary professional contact databases and expert networks;
- open data and public sources (e.g. registries, organizational websites, social media) to identify relevant individuals;

- official letters from the IOM Mission in Ukraine and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, as well as an information campaign on social media.

All available measures were used during recruitment to ensure a high level of relevance, expertise, and thematic engagement of respondents. Screening questionnaires were applied to assess eligibility, including questions on demographic characteristics and professional experience, in order to determine compliance with the study criteria (e.g. possession of UBD status or other supporting documentation for war veterans; involvement of a CSO or a government body unit in service provision for war veterans; engagement in veterans policy). Only respondents who met the criteria agreed with IOM and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and consented to participate were included in the study.

All in-depth interviews were conducted based on informed consent for participation and recording. Particular attention was paid to ensuring privacy and confidentiality, especially when working with sensitive respondent groups (e.g. persons with disabilities or war veterans).

In total, 15 interviewers, 12 regional supervisors, and one field manager were engaged in the qualitative fieldwork. All interviewers had at least completed secondary education and prior experience in conducting face-to-face interviews for a minimum of six months. Approximately 93 per cent of interviewers were women. Fieldwork was conducted from 25 September to 9 October 2025.

Transcription and Processing of In-depth Interviews

All in-depth interviews were digitally recorded with respondents' consent. Following the completion of the fieldwork stage, the recordings were used to prepare full verbatim transcripts in Ukrainian and analytical extracts for further analysis. All transcripts underwent an anonymization procedure: any personal data or identifiers that could directly or indirectly reveal a respondent's identity (name, place of work, specific institutions, etc.) were removed or replaced with generic references. Only aggregated findings and anonymized quotations are used in this analytical report to illustrate key points.

Study Limitations

Despite broad geographic coverage, the study has several limitations. Due to security risks, the quantitative survey was not conducted in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, limiting the ability to compare situations in areas with the highest concentration of combat experience. Access to respondents in some ASCs was constrained by requirements for official letters and administrative procedures, which may have affected coverage levels and staff willingness to participate. In addition, the findings are based on self-assessments by war veterans and ASC staff, which may not fully reflect objective service quality indicators. Nevertheless, the applied quantitative and qualitative methodology ensures a high level of reliability and enables a comprehensive understanding of the key challenges and needs of the target groups.

RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

WAR VETERANS

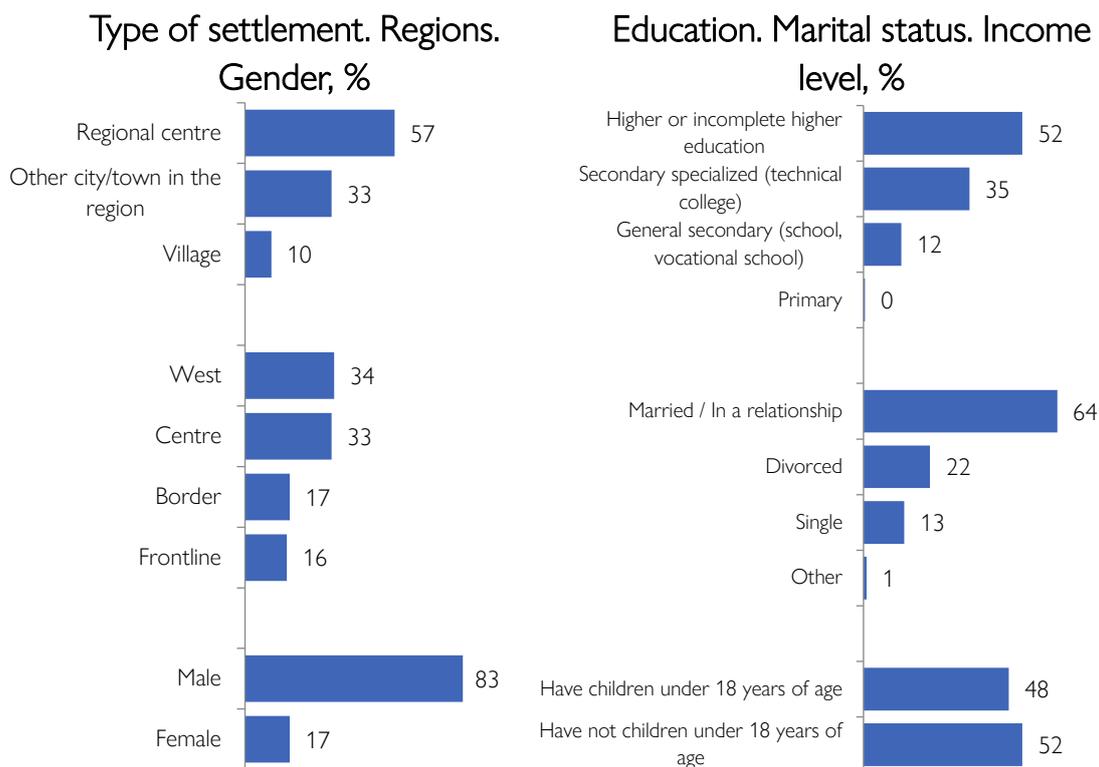
Socio-demographic Characteristics of Surveyed War Veterans

According to the results of the quantitative survey of war veterans, the socio-demographic structure of the sample is as follows: more than half of respondents (57%) reside in regional centres, 33% live in other cities, and 10% in rural areas. In terms of regional distribution, the majority of respondents reside in the Western region (34%) and the Central region (33%). A further 17% live in border regions, and 16% in frontline regions. Among war veterans, men constitute the largest share of respondents (83%), while women account for 17% of the total sample.

With regard to education, half of respondents (52%) have completed or incomplete higher education, 35% have secondary specialized education, and 12% have general secondary education. Less than 1% reported having only primary education. The largest proportion of war veterans (64%) are married or in a relationship. A total of 22% are divorced, while 13% are unmarried.

Fig. 1.1

Fig. 1.2



Regarding the presence of children among war veterans, the distribution is fairly even: half of respondents (48%) reported having children under the age of 18, while the other half (52%) reported having no children.

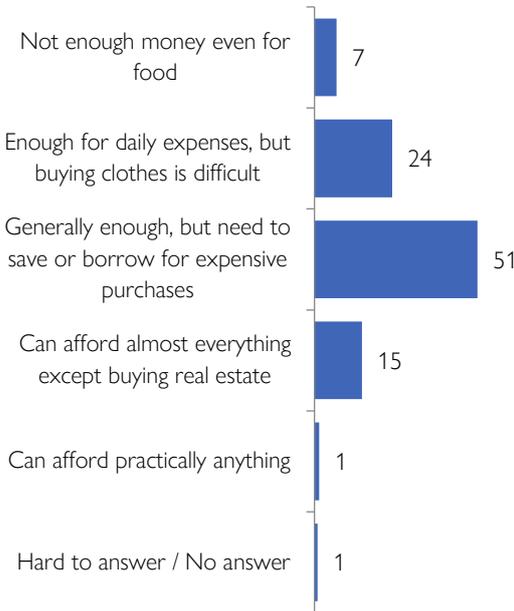
Overall, the majority of war veterans report a medium level of income. A total of 51% indicated that their income is generally sufficient for everyday needs, but that they need to save or borrow money to purchase expensive items. Another 24% reported a somewhat worse situation, stating that purchasing clothing is difficult for them. At the same time, 15% indicated that their income is sufficient for almost all needs, but that purchasing an apartment or a house remains unaffordable. Only 7% reported that their income is insufficient even for food.

Half of surveyed war veterans (50%) are employed, while 21% are pensioners or persons with disabilities. A total of 13% are unemployed, while 5% run their own business and 4% are engaged in household activities.

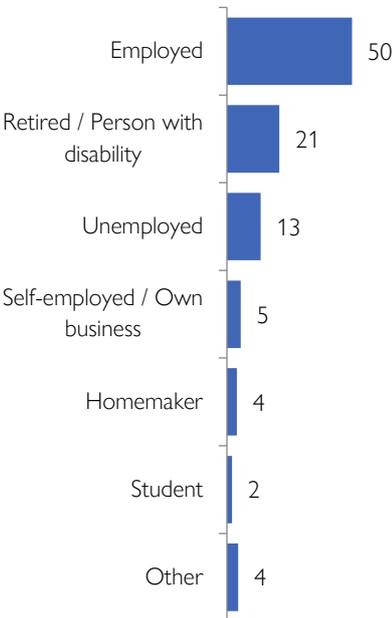
Fig. 1.3

Fig. 1.4

Which of the following best describes your financial situation? %



What is your current employment status? %



The largest groups among war veterans are those who joined military service voluntarily (32%) and those who were mobilized (25%). A significant share of respondents (20%) served under a contract, while 16% joined the Territorial Defense Forces. A total of 75% obtained war veteran status after 24 February 2022, while 25% received this status between 2014 and 23 February 2022.

Fig. 1.5

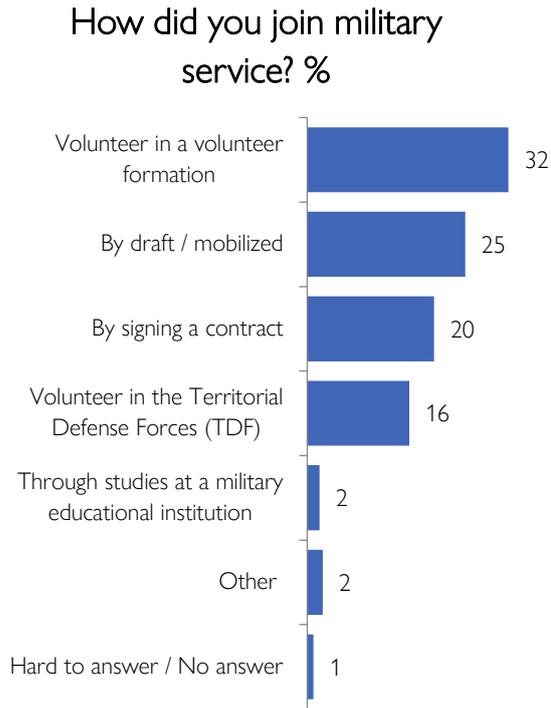
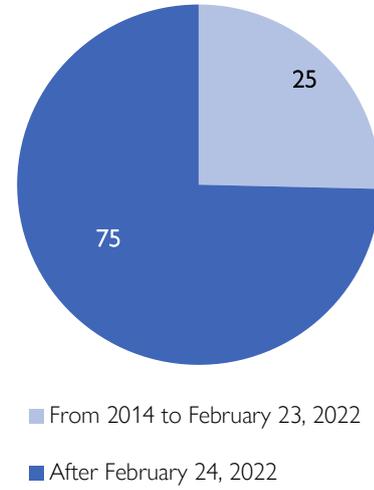


Fig. 1.6

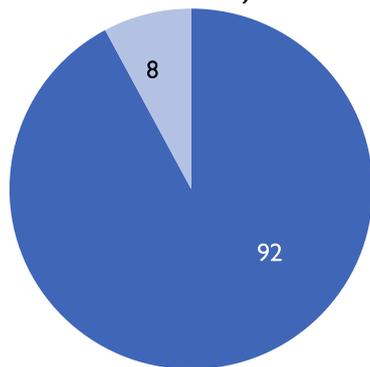
When did you obtain veteran status (combatant ID or other official documents)? %



The absolute majority of war veterans (92%) hold the status of UBD. Half of respondents (51%) reported having a disability resulting from the war.

Fig. 1.7

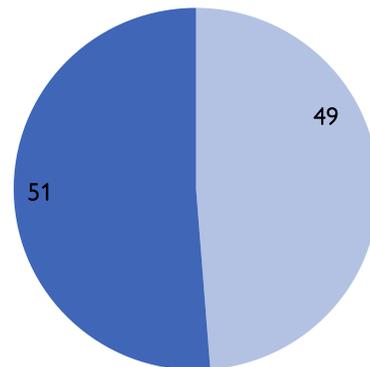
Do you have the status of a combatant (participant in hostilities)? %



■ Yes
■ No

Fig. 1.8

Do you have a disability as a result of the war? %

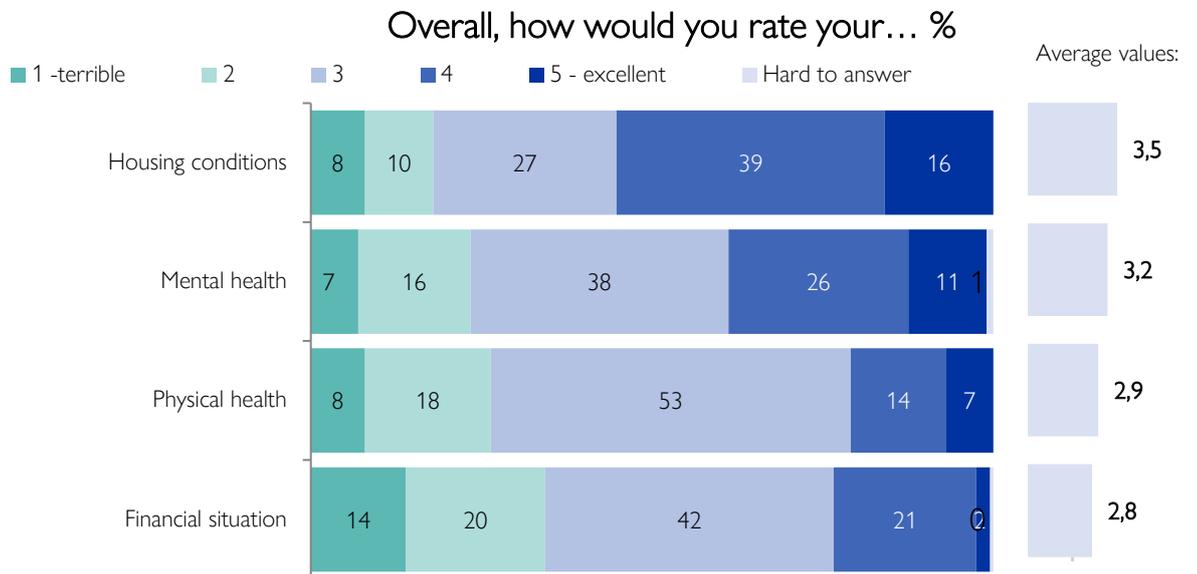


■ Yes
■ No

Overall Situation

Surveyed war veterans rated their housing conditions and mental health above average, at 3.5 and 3.2 points, respectively. Other aspects, such as physical health and financial situation, received lower ratings, at 2.9 and 2.8 points, respectively.

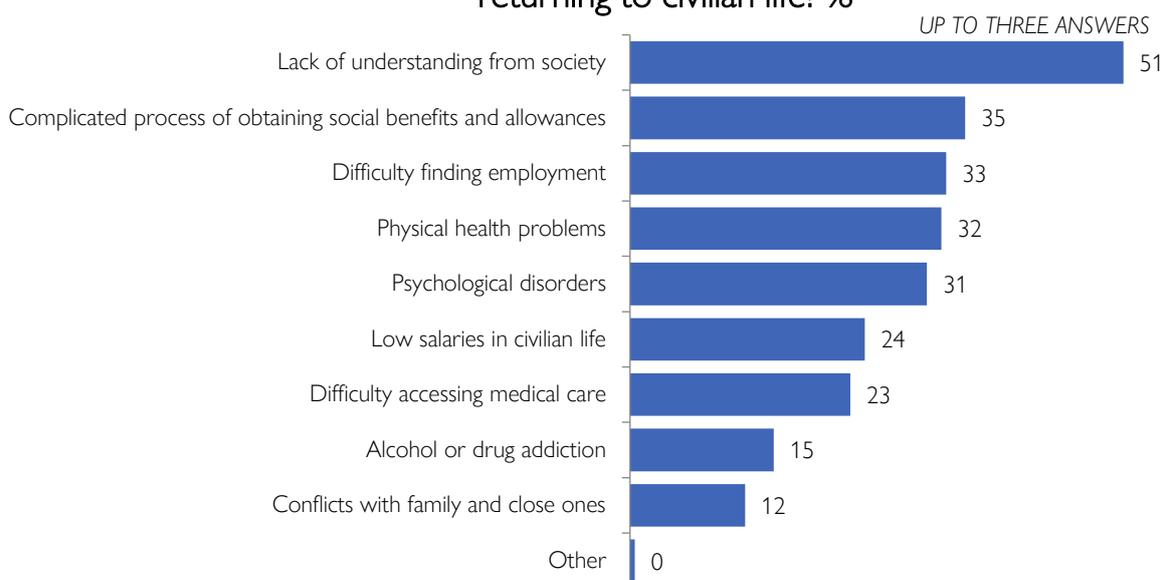
Fig. 1.9



The main problem most frequently faced by war veterans when returning to civilian life is a lack of understanding from society (51%). Approximately one third of surveyed war veterans reported difficulties with accessing social benefits, challenges in finding employment, physical health problems, and psychological disorders.

Fig. 1.10

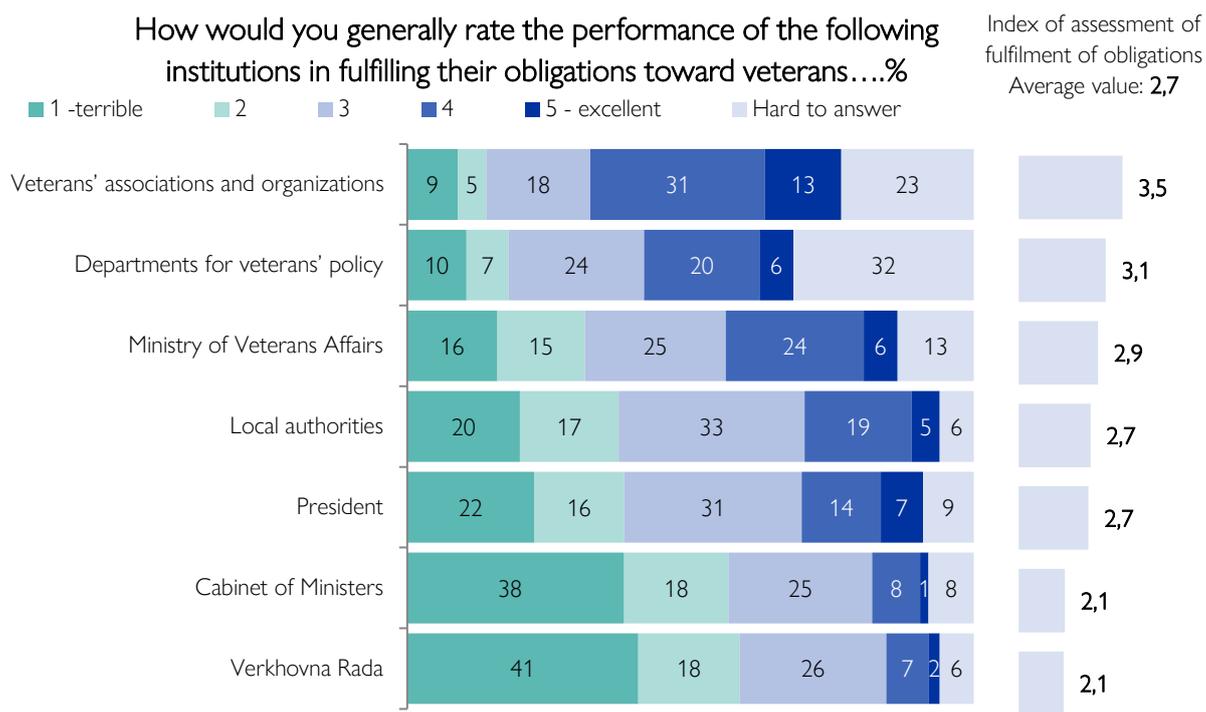
In your opinion, what are the main challenges veterans face when returning to civilian life? %



Assessment of the Fulfilment of Obligations by Selected Organizations towards War Veterans

The overall Index of the fulfilment of obligations towards war veterans is below average and amounts to 2.7 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “terrible” and 5 means “excellent”). Performance was rated above average for veterans’ associations and organizations (3.5 points), as well as for structural units responsible for veterans’ policy (3.1 points). The lowest ratings were given to the Cabinet of Ministers and the Verkhovna Rada (2.1 points each).

Fig. 2.1

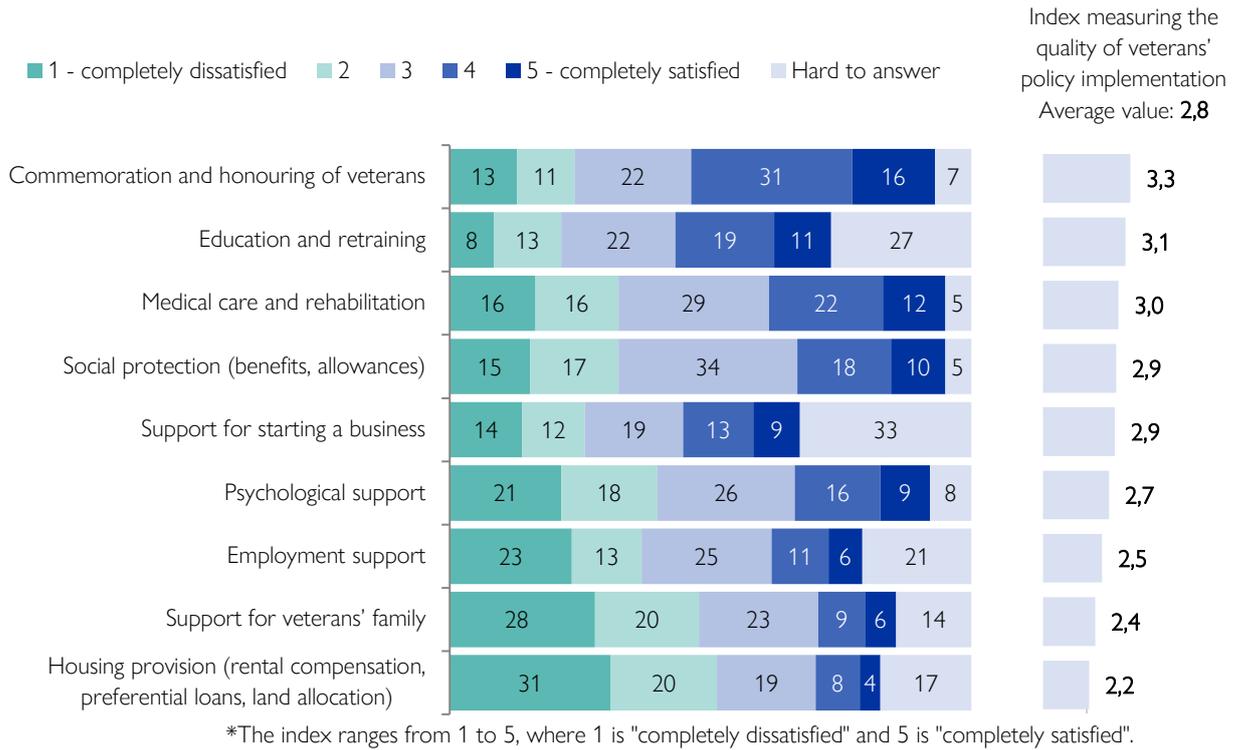


*The index ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 is "terrible" and 5 is "excellent."

Satisfaction with the Quality of Implementation of Specific Areas of Veterans Policy

The overall Index of the quality of veterans’ policy implementation is below average and stands at 2.8 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “completely dissatisfied” and 5 means “completely satisfied”). Ratings above average were given to memorialization and commemoration (3.3 points) and to education and retraining (3.1 points). The lowest ratings were assigned to support for war veterans’ families (2.4 points) and housing provision (2.2 points).

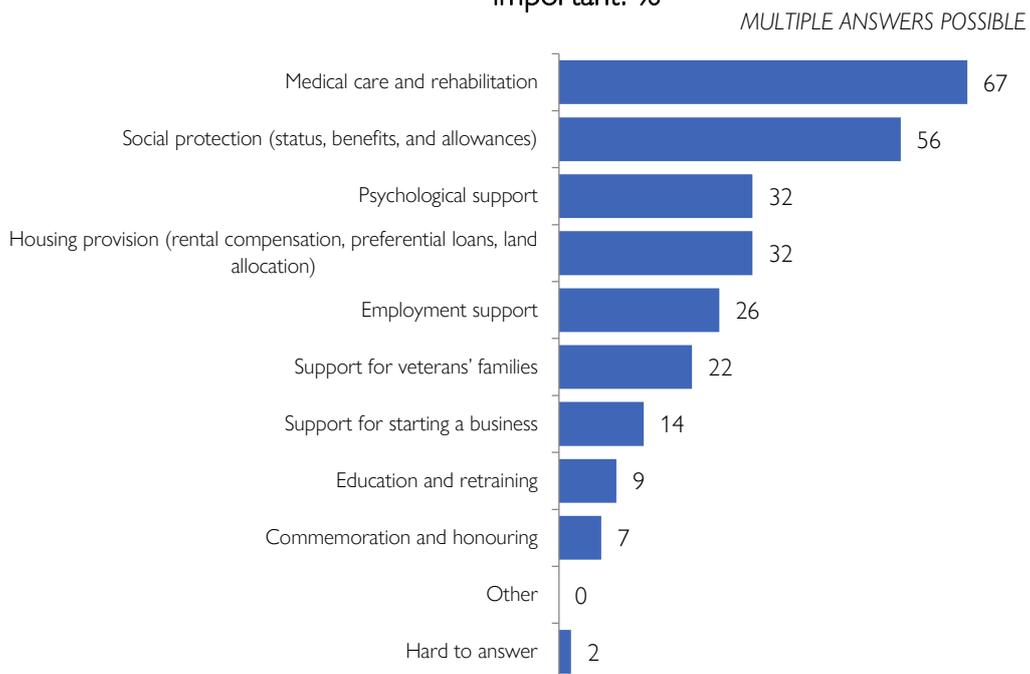
How satisfied are you with the quality of implementation of the following areas of veterans' policy...%



The surveyed war veterans identified medical care and rehabilitation (67%) and social protection (56%) as the highest priority areas of veterans' policy. The lowest priority was assigned to education and retraining (9%) and to memorialization and commemoration (7%).

Fig. 3.2

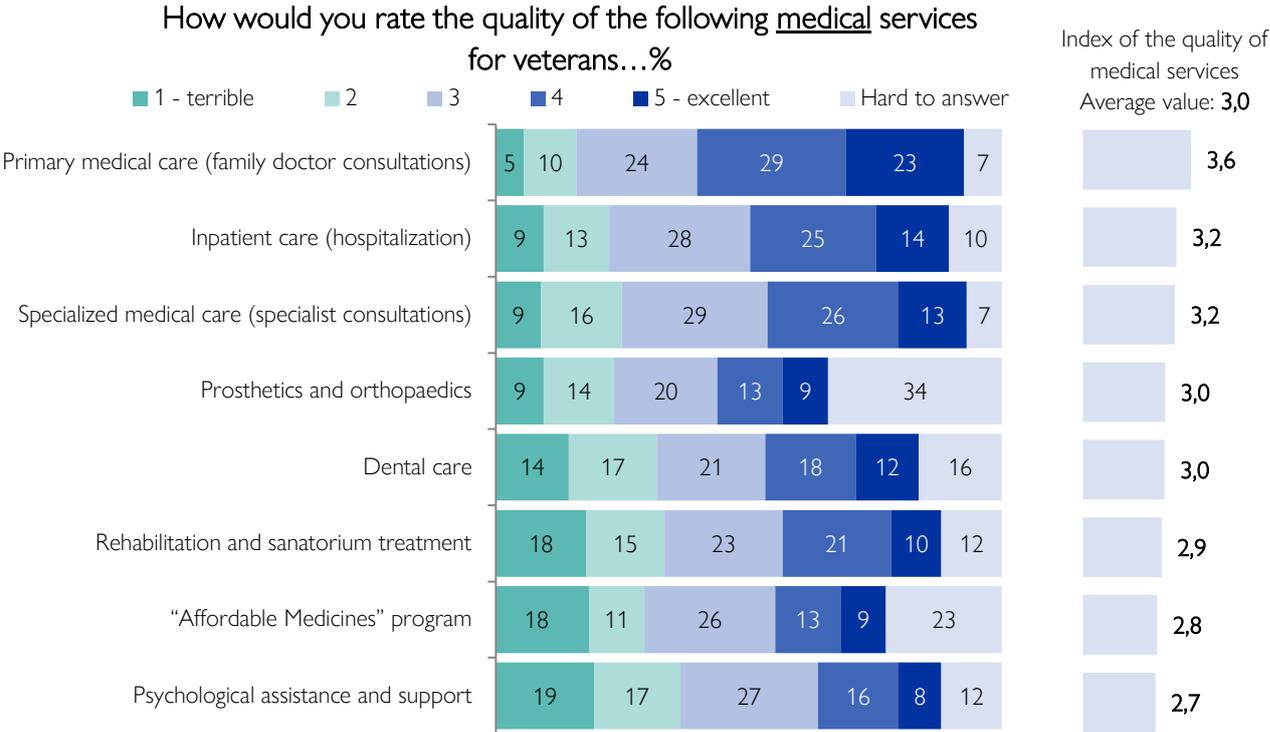
Which of the following areas of veterans' policy do you consider most important? %



Assessment of the Quality of Medical Services and Selected Types of Social Support for War Veterans

The overall Index of the quality of medical service provision for war veterans stands at 3.0 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “terrible” and 5 means “excellent”). Relatively higher ratings were given to primary healthcare (3.6 points), inpatient care (3.2 points), and specialized medical care (3.2 points), while psychological assistance and support received the lowest rating (2.7 points).

Fig. 4.1

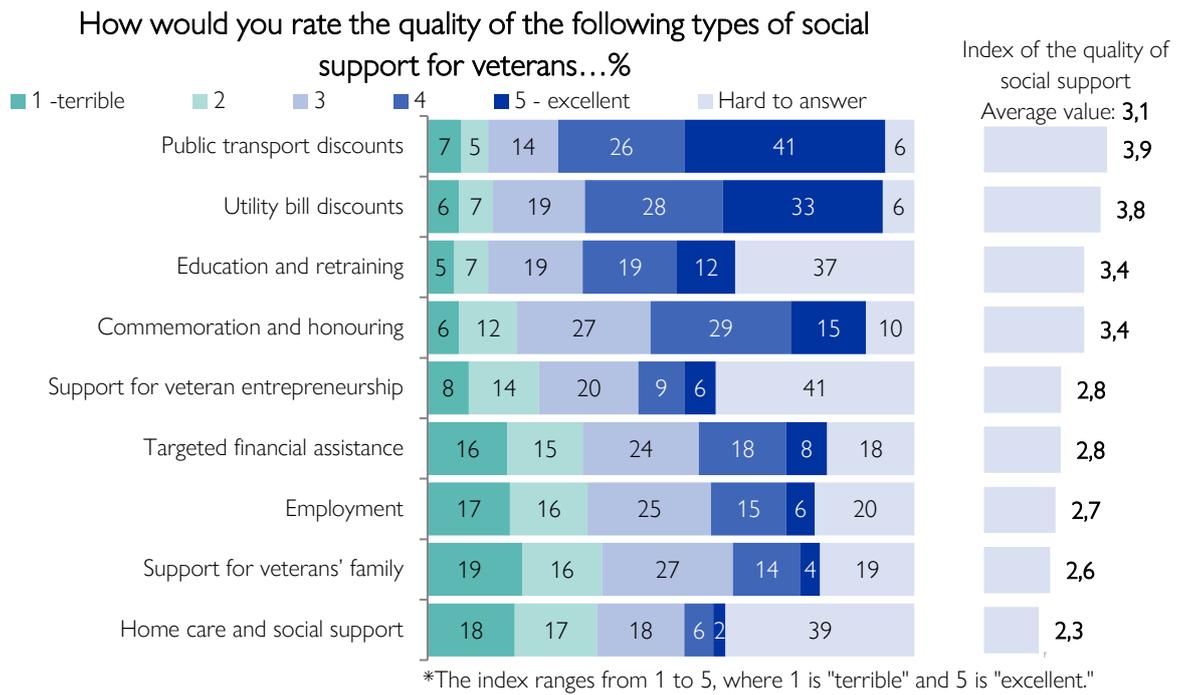


*The index ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 is "terrible" and 5 is "excellent."

The overall Index of the quality of social support provision for war veterans stands at 3.1 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “terrible” and 5 means “excellent”). Among the components of this Index, relatively higher ratings were given to public transport benefits (3.9 points) and benefits for housing and utility payments (3.8 points).

Ratings below average were assigned to support for veteran entrepreneurship (2.8 points), employment support (2.7 points), support for war veterans’ families (2.6 points), and home care and social case management (2.3 points).

Fig. 5.1



85% of surveyed war veterans reported having applied for social assistance or benefits within the past three years. 88% applied for these services through ASCs, 41% through the Pension Fund, and 30% through social protection departments.

Fig. 5.2

Have you applied in the past three years for any veteran-related statuses, benefits, or payments? %

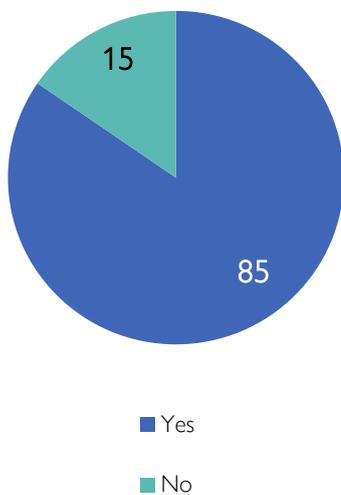
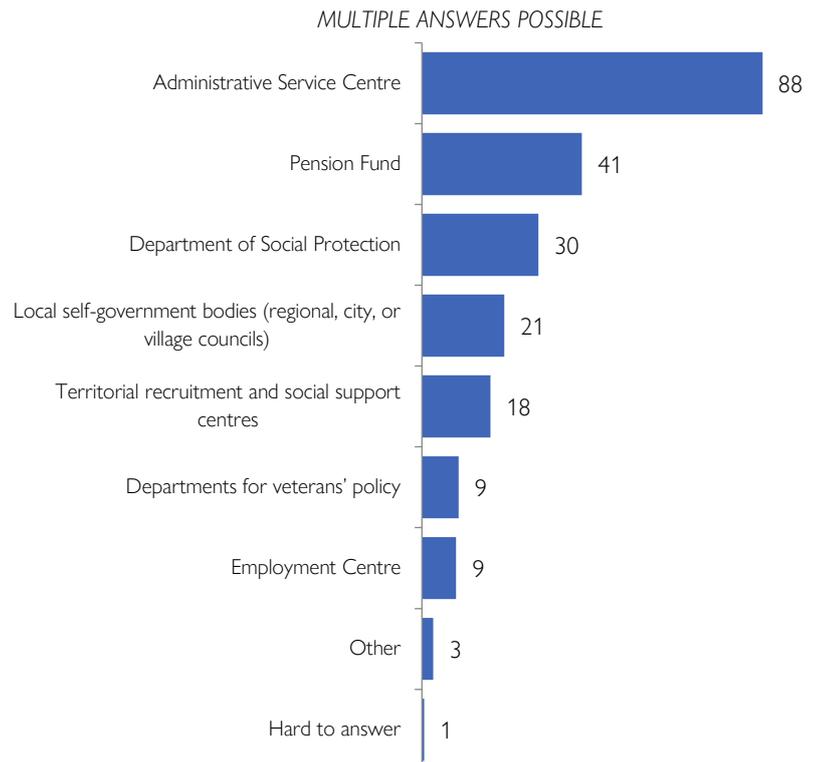


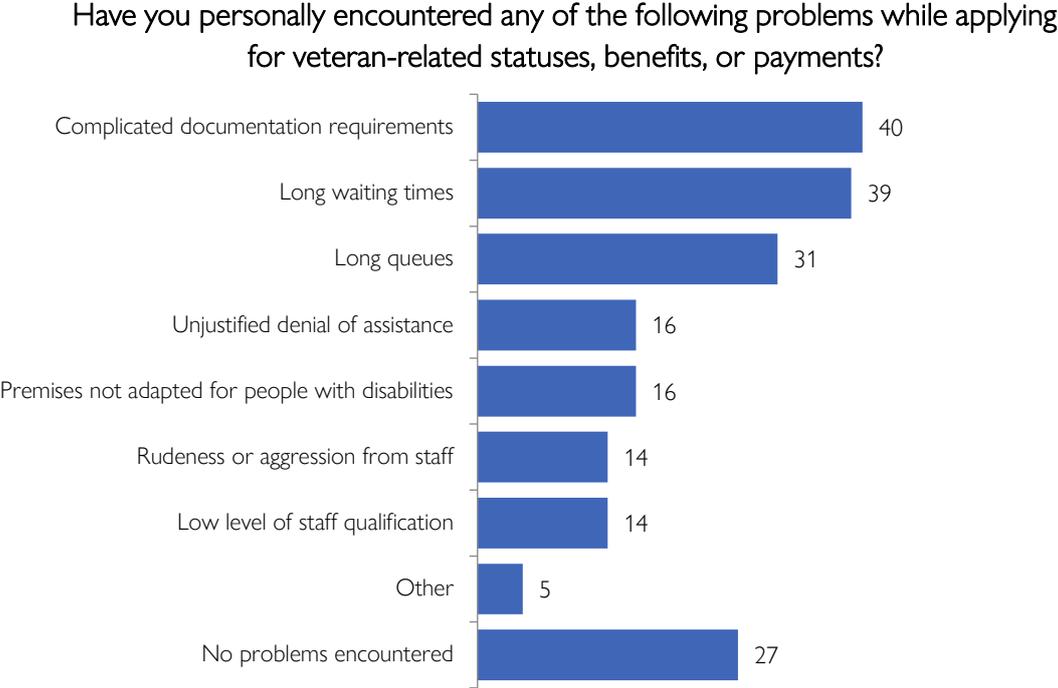
Fig. 5.3

Where did you apply in the past three years for veteran-related statuses, benefits, or payments? %



Among the problems personally encountered by war veterans when applying for statuses, benefits, or payments, the main issues were the complexity of the required documentation package (40%), long waiting times (39%), and long queues (31%).

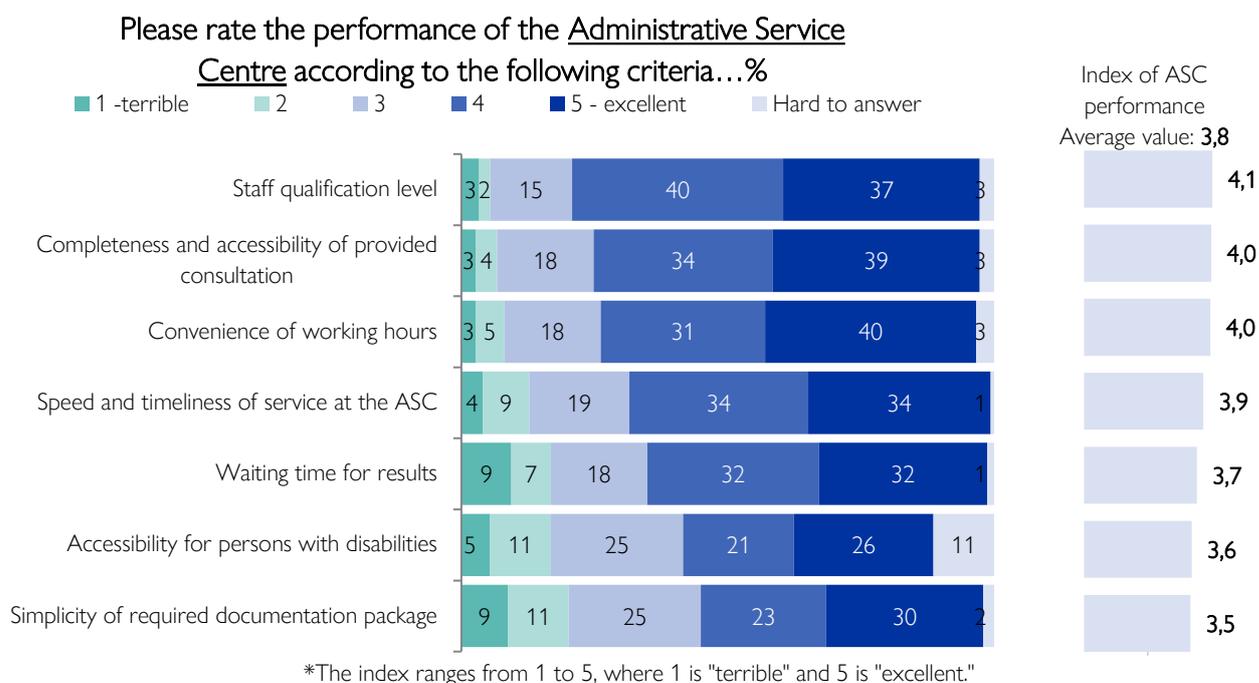
Fig. 5.4



Assessment of the Performance of Administrative Services Centres

According to the survey results among war veterans, the overall Index of the quality of ASC performance stands at 3.8 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “terrible” and 5 means “excellent”). Surveyed war veterans rated the level of qualification of ASC staff highly (4.1 points), as well as the completeness and accessibility of the consultations provided and the convenience of working hours (4.0 points each). The optimization (simplicity) of the documentation package received a relatively lower rating (3.5 points).

Fig. 6.1



Assessment of Awareness of Special Procedures for Applying for and Accessing Services for War Veterans

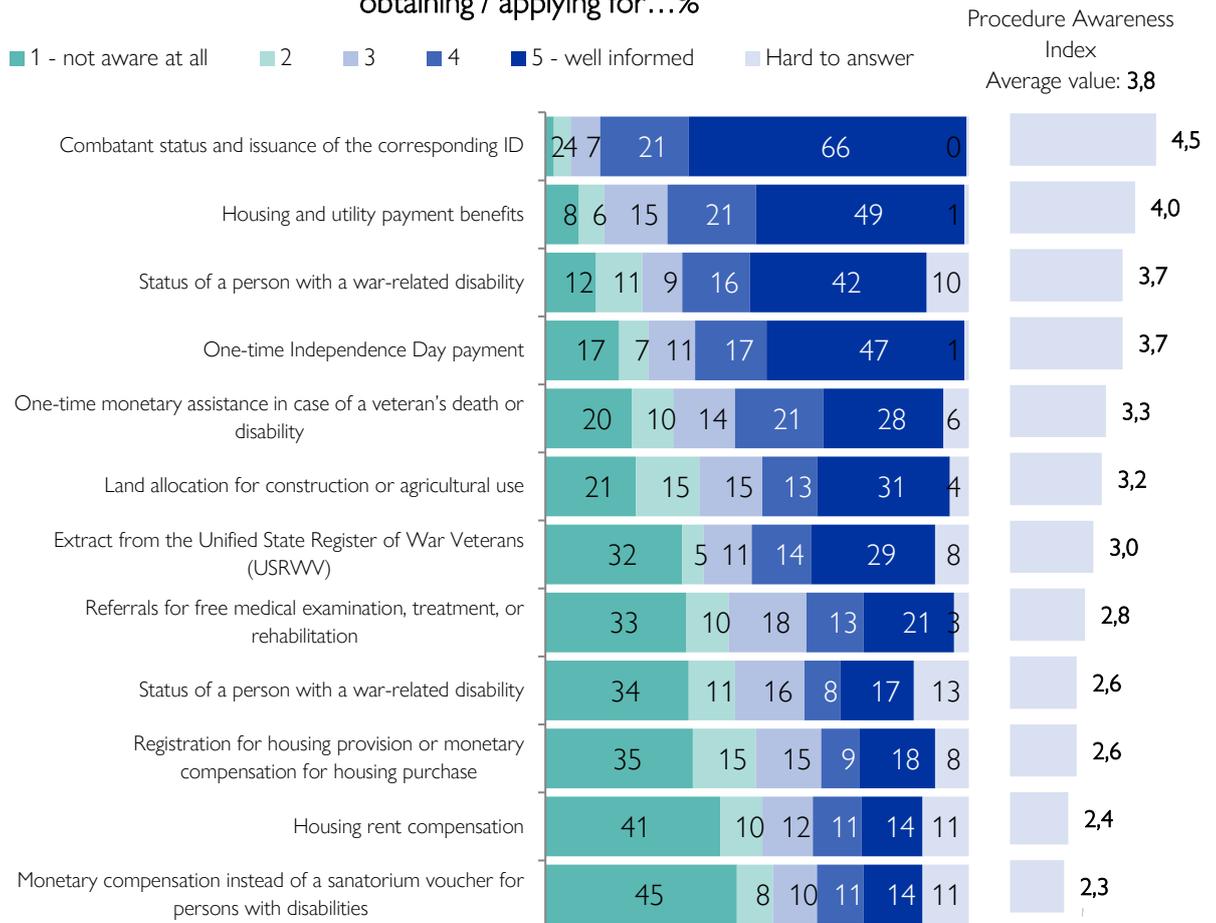
The Index of awareness regarding procedures for applying for or accessing services for war veterans stands at 3.2 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not aware at all” and 5 means “well informed”).

The highest awareness ratings were recorded for the following procedures: obtaining the status of a participant in hostilities and issuance of the corresponding certificate (4.5 points), as well as benefits for housing and utility payments (4.0 points).

The lowest awareness ratings were reported for procedures related to obtaining certificates for free medical examinations, treatment, or rehabilitation (2.8 points); benefits for the purchase of fuel for household needs and registration on the housing waiting list for the purpose of obtaining housing or monetary compensation (2.6 points each); compensation for housing rent (2.4 points); and monetary compensation in lieu of sanatorium treatment vouchers for persons with disabilities (2.3 points).

Fig 7.1

Please rate your level of awareness regarding the procedure for obtaining / applying for...%



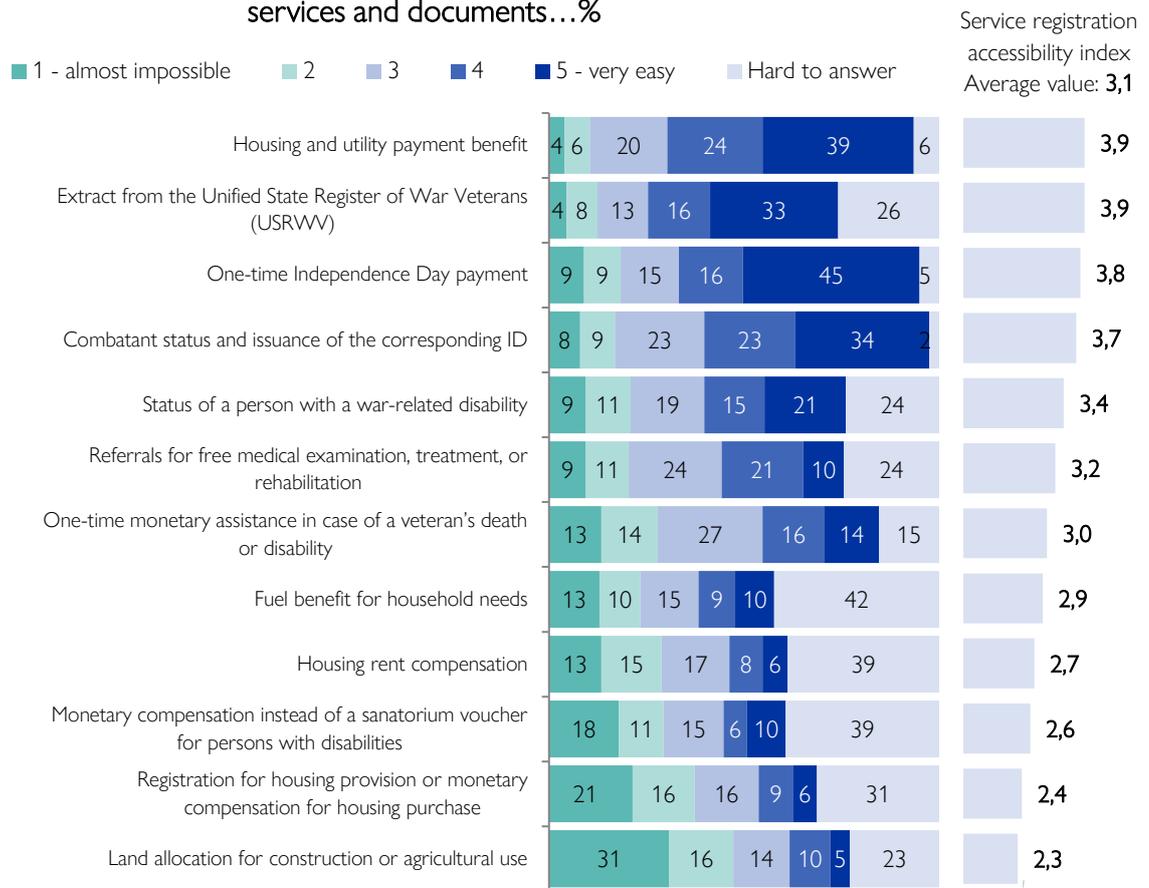
*The index ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 means "not aware at all" and 5 means "well informed".

Assessment of Accessibility of Applying for Specific Services and Documents for War Veterans

The overall Index of accessibility of applying for services for war veterans stands at 3.1 points. Relatively higher ratings were given to the accessibility of applying for benefits for housing and utility payments and obtaining an extract from the Unified State Register of War Veterans (3.9 points each), the allocation of a one-time financial payment on Independence Day (3.8 points), and obtaining the status of a participant in hostilities and the issuance of the corresponding certificate (3.7 points). The lowest accessibility ratings were assigned to applying for benefits for the purchase of fuel for household needs (2.9 points), compensation for housing rent (2.7 points), monetary compensation in lieu of a sanatorium treatment voucher (2.6 points), registration on the housing waiting list (2.4 points), and obtaining a land plot for construction (2.3 points).

Fig. 8.1

Please rate the accessibility of obtaining the following veteran services and documents...%



*The index ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 is "almost impossible" and 5 is "very easy".

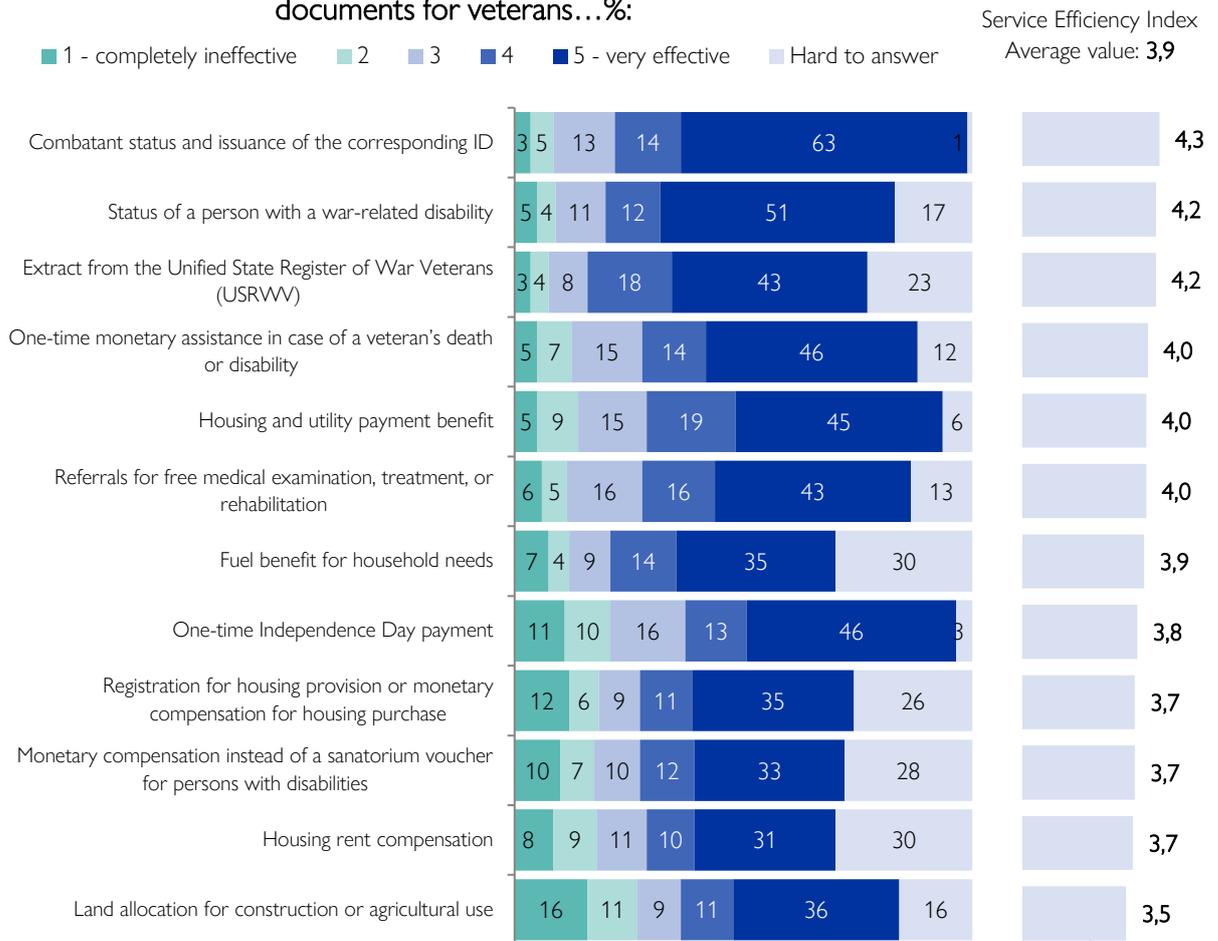
Assessment of the Effectiveness of Specific Services, Procedures, and Documents for War Veterans

The overall Index of effectiveness of specific services, procedures, and documents for war veterans stands at 3.9 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “completely ineffective” and 5 means “very effective”). Surveyed war veterans rated the effectiveness of obtaining the status of a participant in hostilities and the issuance of the corresponding certificate at a high level (4.3 points), as well as obtaining the status of a person with a disability resulting from the war and an extract from the Unified State Register of War Veterans (4.2 points each).

Relatively lower effectiveness ratings were given to registration on the housing waiting list for the purpose of obtaining housing, monetary compensation in lieu of sanatorium treatment, and compensation for housing rent (3.7 points each), as well as obtaining land plots for construction (3.5 points).

Fig. 9.1

Please rate the effectiveness of the following services and documents for veterans...%:



*The index ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 is "completely ineffective" and 5 is "very effective."

SURVEY OF ASC STAFF

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Surveyed ASC Staff

The quantitative survey of ASC staff had the following socio-demographic structure: 45% of respondents reside in regional centres, 50% in other cities, and 6% in rural areas. In terms of regional distribution, 33% reside in the Western region, 32% in the Central region, 18% in frontline regions, and 17% in border regions. The overwhelming majority of surveyed ASC staff are women (94%). Overall work experience among respondents is predominantly more than 5 years (41%). A total of 23% have 3–5 years of experience, 27% have 1–3 years, and 10% have worked for less than 1 year. More than half of respondents (51%) have between 1 and 3 years of experience working with war veterans. A total of 26% have worked with war veterans for less than 1 year, 7% for more than 5 years, and 17% for 3–5 years.

Fig. 10.1

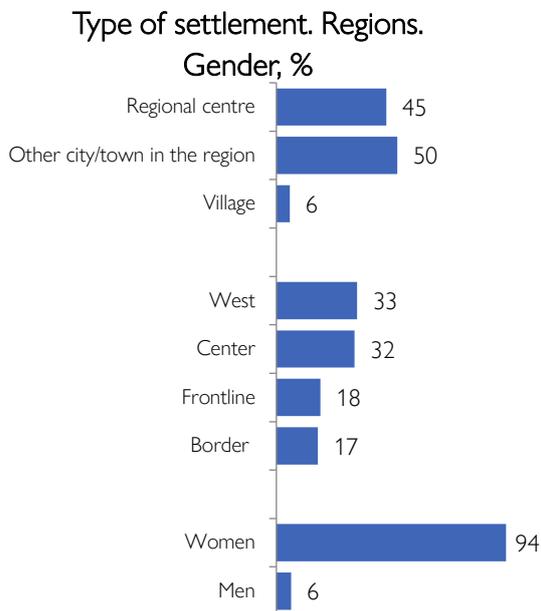
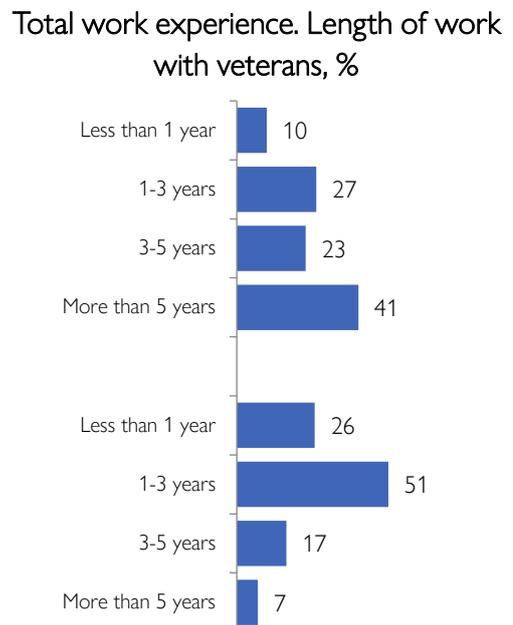
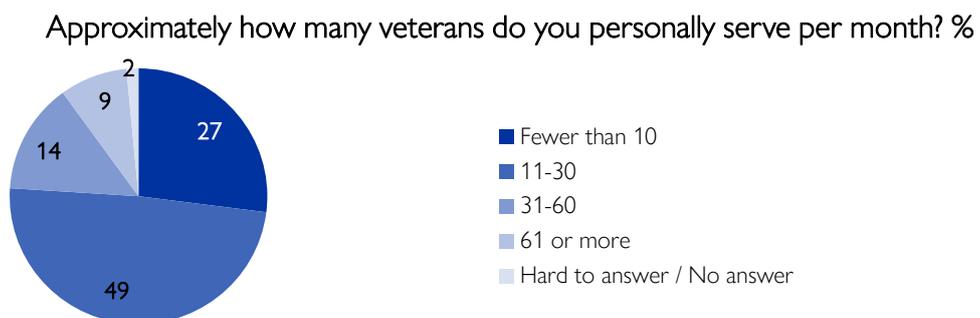


Fig. 10.2



27% of surveyed respondents reported serving fewer than 10 war veterans per month. Nearly half of respondents (49%) serve between 11 and 30 war veterans, 14% serve between 31 and 60 war veterans, and 9% serve more than 60 war veterans per month.

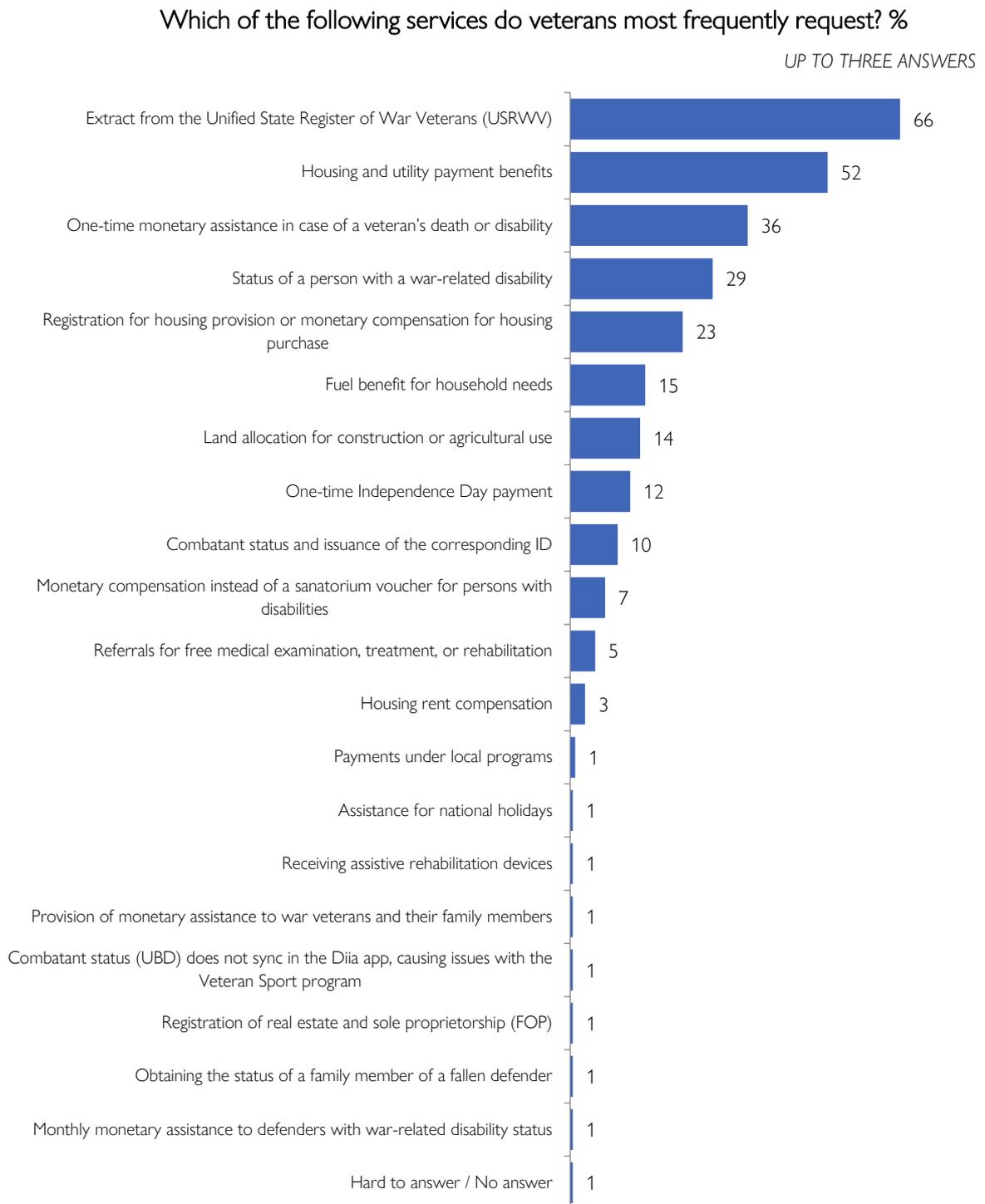
Fig. 10.3



Overall Situation

The services most frequently requested by war veterans include obtaining an extract from the Unified State Register of War Veterans (66%) and benefits for housing and utility payments (52%). Other commonly requested services include one-time financial assistance in the event of the death or disability of a war veteran (36%), obtaining the status of a person with a disability resulting from the war (29%), and registration on the housing waiting list for the purpose of obtaining housing or monetary compensation (23%).

Fig. 10.4

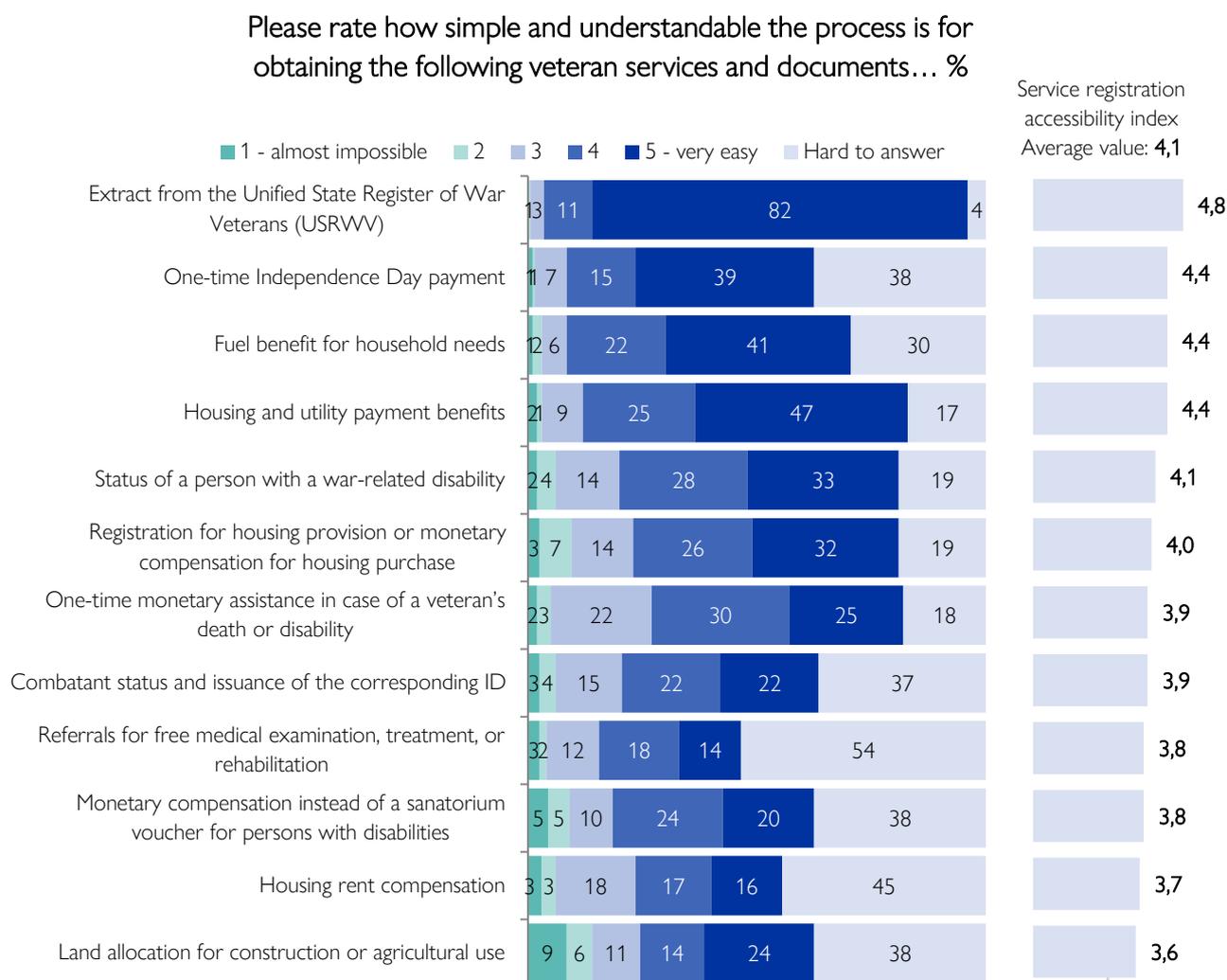


Assessment of the Application Process / Procedures for Accessing Specific Services and Documents for War Veterans

Overall, surveyed ASC staff rated the simplicity and clarity of the processes for applying for services for war veterans highly. The aggregated Index of accessibility of service application processes stands at 4.1 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “practically impossible” and 5 means “very easy”).

Among the listed services, the highest ratings for simplicity and clarity were given to obtaining an extract from the Unified State Register of War Veterans (4.8 points); the one-time Independence Day payment, benefits for the purchase of fuel for household needs, and benefits for housing payments (4.4 points each); as well as obtaining the status of a person with a disability resulting from the war (4.1 points). Compared to other services, lower ratings for simplicity and clarity were assigned to procedures for obtaining land plots for construction or agricultural use (3.6 points) and compensation for housing rent (3.7 points).

Fig. 11.1



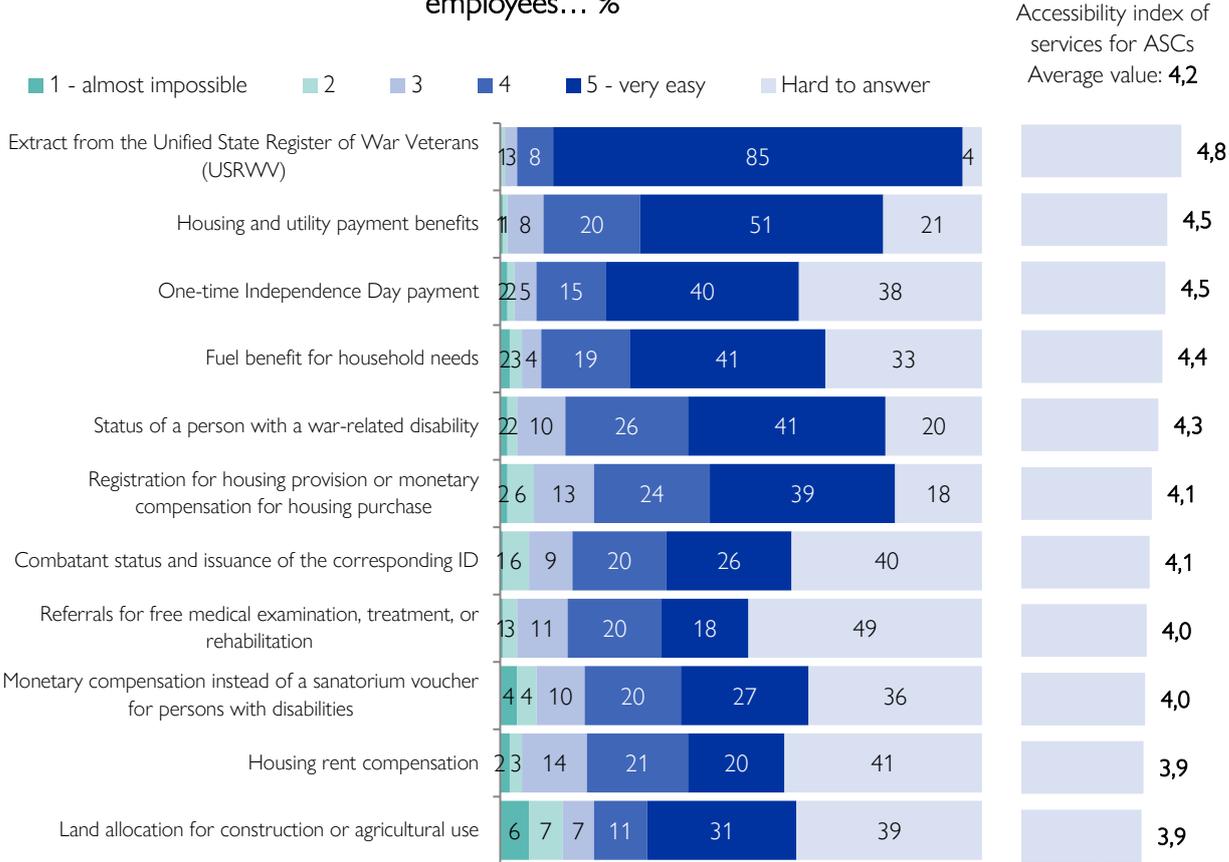
*The index ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 is "almost impossible" and 5 is "very easy".

Assessment of the Application Process / Procedures for Accessing Specific Services and Documents by ASC Staff

When assessing the simplicity and clarity of applying for the same set of services by ASC staff, the overall Index stands at 4.2 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, when 1 means “practically impossible” and 5 means “very easy”), which is a high score.

Fig. 12.1

Please rate how simple and understandable the process is for obtaining the following veteran services and documents for ASC employees... %



*The index ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 is "almost impossible" and 5 is "very easy".

Assessment of the Quality of Provision of Selected Types of Social Support for War Veterans

Surveyed ASC staff also rated the quality of provision of selected types of social support for war veterans at a high level. The aggregated Index of the quality of social support provision stands at 4.1 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “terrible” and 5 means “excellent”). Among the types of social support assessed, the highest ratings were given to benefits for housing and utility payments and to memorialization and commemoration (4.6 points each). Relatively lower ratings were assigned to the quality of support related to employment of war veterans (3.7 points) and access to housing or land plots (3.5 points).

Barriers and Challenges in Working with War Veterans

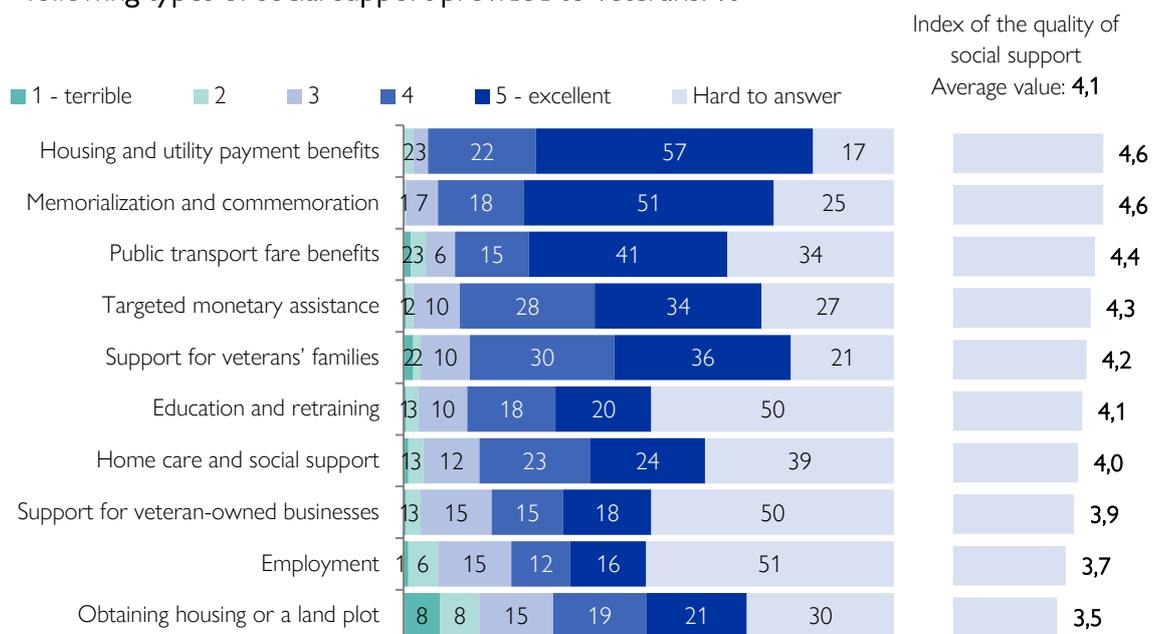
Nearly 60% of surveyed ASC representatives reported that they almost never encounter refusals to provide or process services for war veterans by service providers. 16% encounter such cases several times a year, 15% several times a month, 6% several times a week, and 2% several times a day.

The main reason for refusal to provide services was identified as an incomplete set of documents (75%). Other reasons included non-compliance of documents with legislative requirements (44%) and the absence of supporting documents (40%).

A total of 55% of surveyed ASC staff reported that they almost never encounter conflict situations when serving war veterans. 18% encounter such situations several times a year, 19% several times a month, 7% several times a week, and 1% several times a day. At the same time, the absolute majority of respondents (99%) stated that they know how to act in conflict situations involving war veterans.

Fig. 13.1

As an ASC employee, how would you rate the quality of the following types of social support provided to veterans? %



*The index ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 is "terrible" and 5 is "excellent."

Fig. 14.1

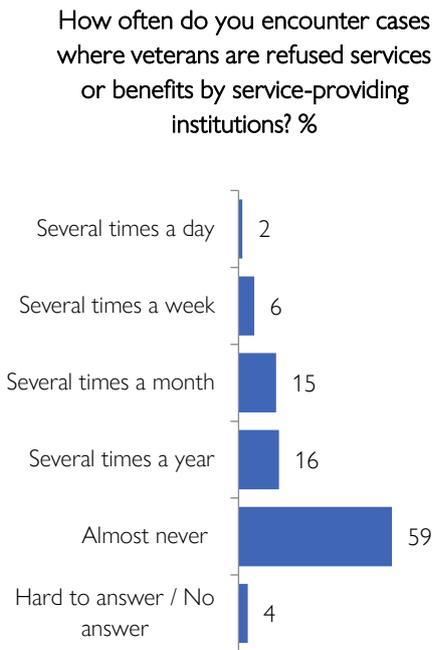


Fig. 14.2

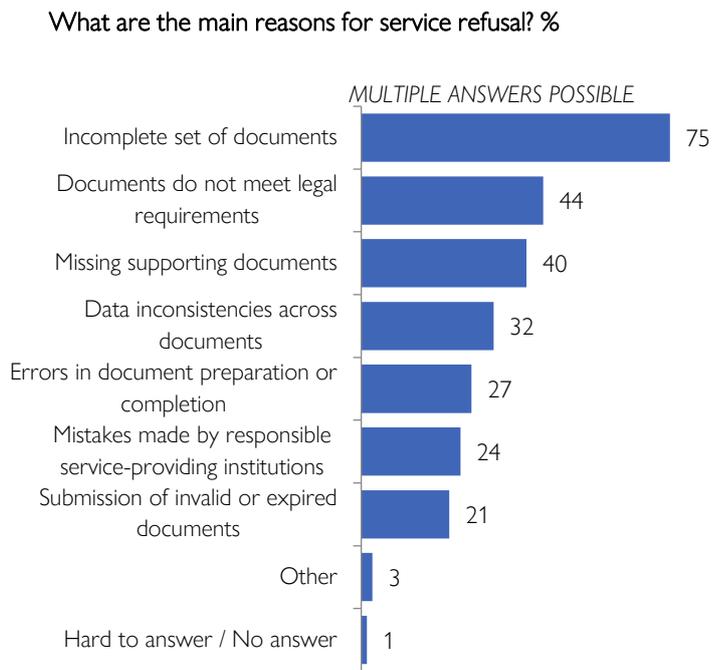


Fig. 14.3

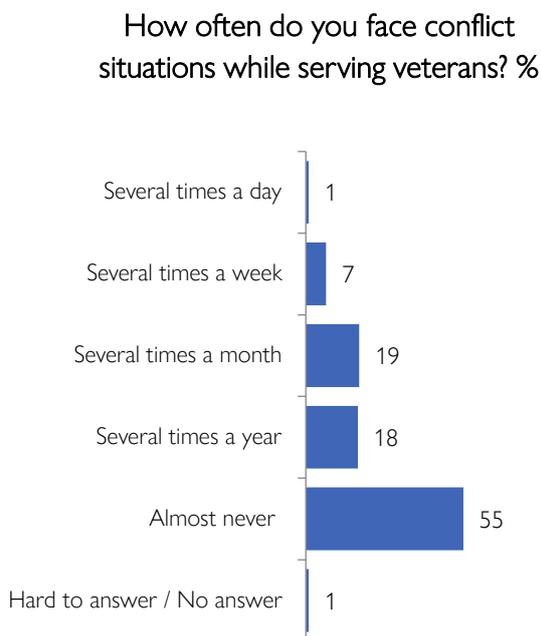
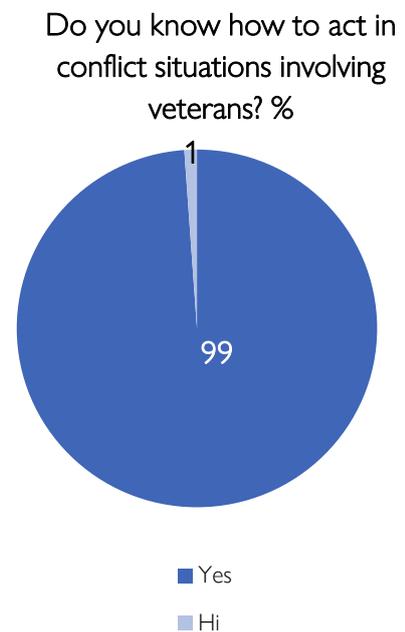


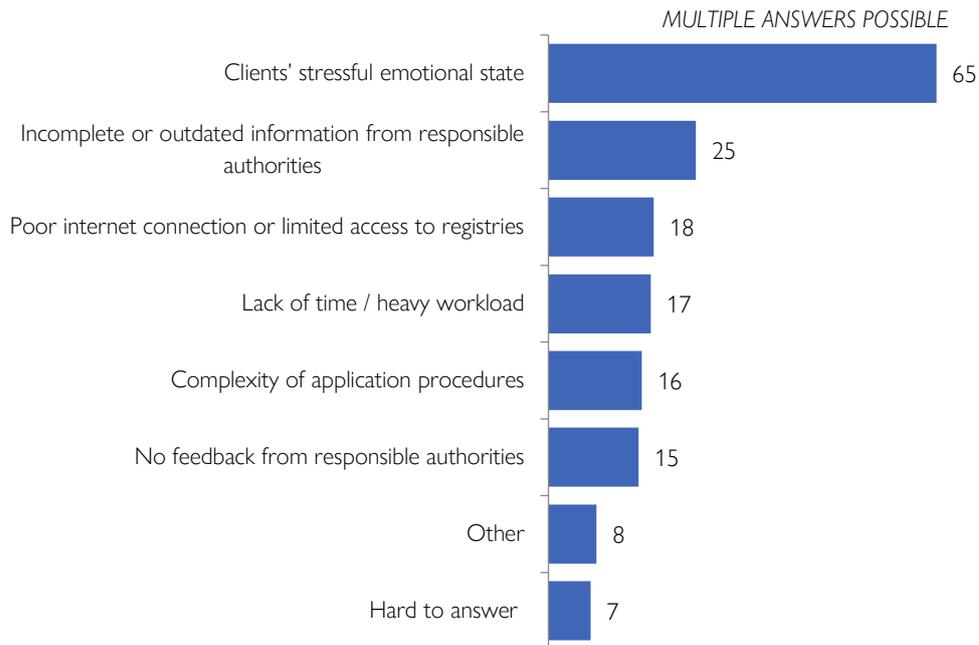
Fig. 14.4



The main reason for difficulties in working with war veterans, as indicated by 65% of surveyed respondents, was the clients' stressful emotional state. A further 25% pointed to incomplete or outdated information from responsible public authorities.

Fig. 14.5

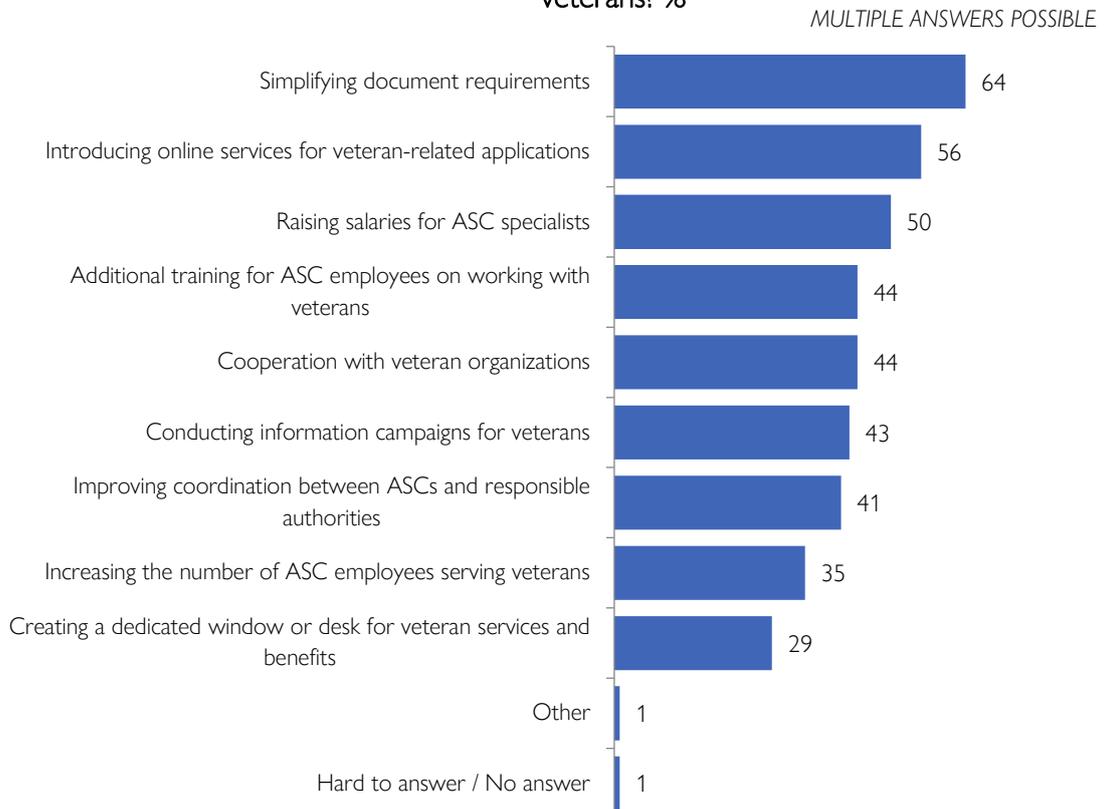
What are the main challenges you face when working with veterans? %



According to surveyed ASC staff, the measures that could most significantly improve services for war veterans include simplifying documentation requirements (64%), introducing online services for applying for services and benefits (56%), and increasing remuneration for ASC specialists (50%).

Fig. 14.6

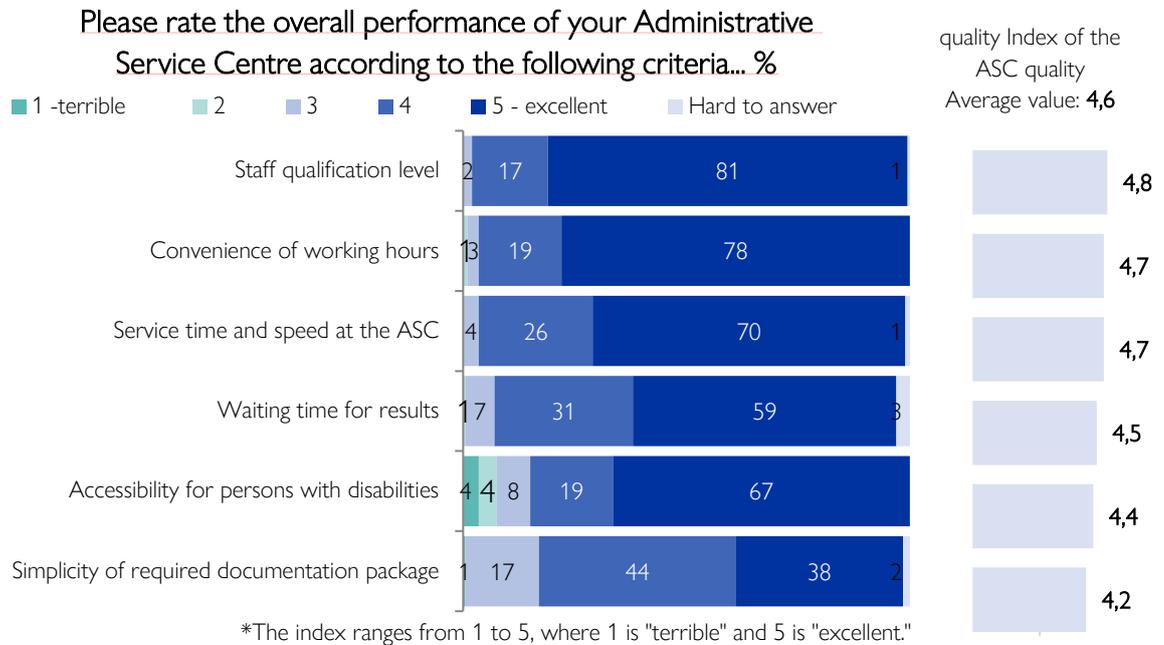
What changes, in your opinion, would most improve the service provided to veterans? %



Assessment of the Performance of ASCs in Providing Administrative Services for War Veterans

The overall Index of the quality of ASC performance stands at 4.6 points (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “terrible” and 5 means “excellent”). All assessment criteria of ASC performance were rated at a high level by ASC staff, in particular the level of staff qualifications (4.8 points). A relatively lower rating was given to the optimization (simplicity) of the documentation package (4.2 points).

Fig. 15.1



More than 80% of surveyed ASC staff reported that their ASC has sufficient material and technical resources to provide high-quality services to war veterans.

64% believe that a dedicated specialist or unit for working with war veterans should be established within ASCs.

Fig. 15.2

Does your ASC have sufficient material and technical resources to ensure quality service for veterans? %

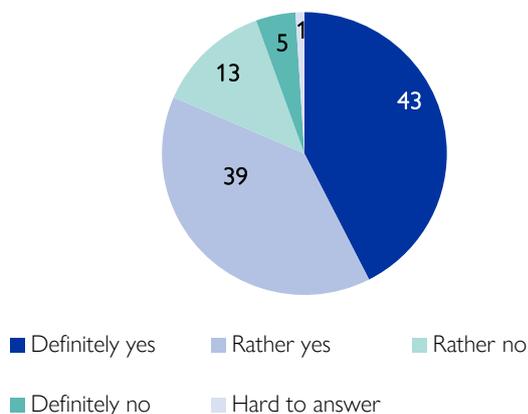
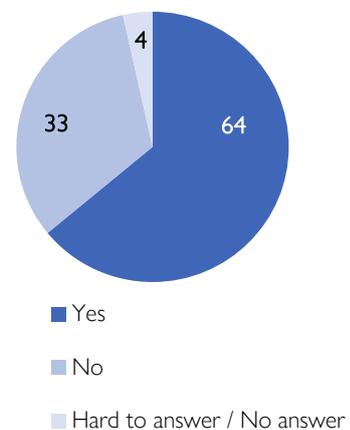


Fig.15.3

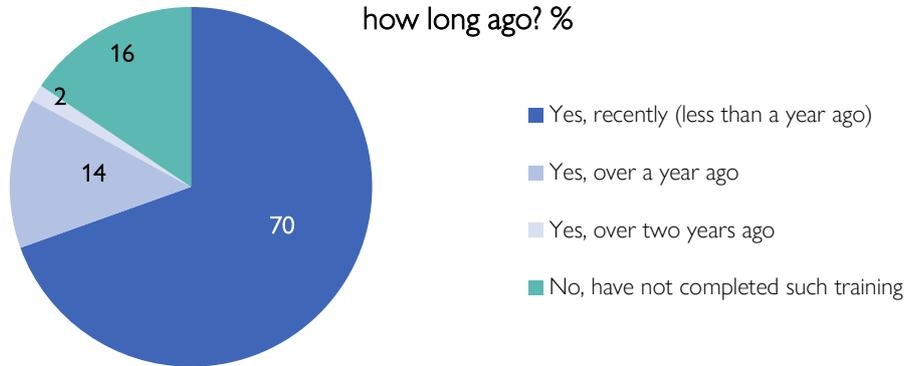
Do you think it is necessary to establish a dedicated specialist or department within ASCs to work with veterans? %



The majority of respondents indicated that they had undergone specialized training related to working with war veterans: 70% less than one year ago, 14% more than one year ago, and 2% more than two years ago.

Fig. 15.4

Have you completed any special training related to working with veterans, and how long ago? %



A total of 16% of surveyed ASC staff believe that additional training on working with war veterans should be conducted monthly, 40% quarterly, 28% semi-annually, and 16% less than once a year.

Overall, 80% of respondents consider such training to be clearly beneficial for their work.

Fig. 15.5

How often, in your opinion, should ASC employees receive additional training on working with veterans? %

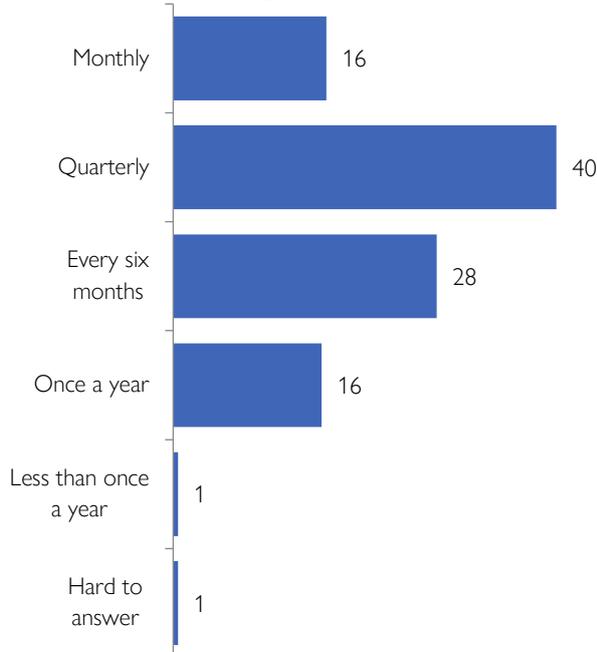
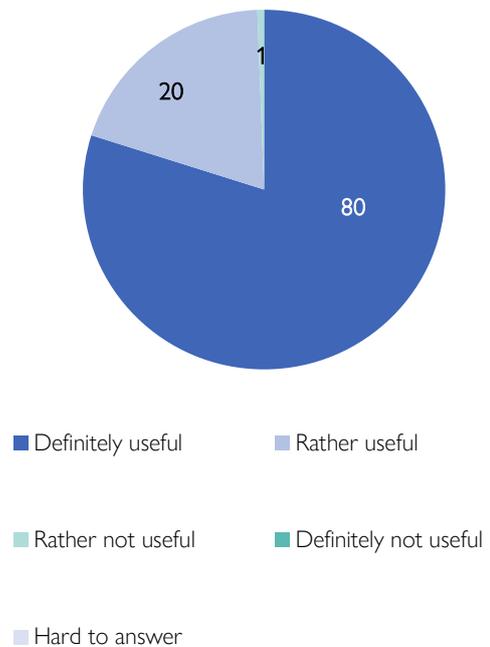


Fig. 15.6

How useful do you consider this training for your work with veterans?



RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

Assessment of Requests from War Veterans and Their Families

Among the most common requests from war veterans encountered by **Case Management Specialists, veterans' policy experts, and representatives of CSOs**, the following can be identified:

- Obtaining information on the rights of war veterans, entitled benefits, and payments
- Legal consultations and legal support
- Processing of statuses (participant in hostilities, person with a disability, etc.)
- Processing and/or restoration of documents and certificates
- Access to benefits, payments, and compensations (housing and utility payments, medical services, public transport, housing purchase, education for children, holiday-related assistance, compensation for injuries, regular (annual) payments, etc.)
- Access to medical services (treatment, rehabilitation, prosthetics, sanatorium treatment, adaptive sports activities, etc.)
- Issues related to the complexity of obtaining and/or delays in financial payments
- Non-fulfilment by the state of its guarantees towards war veterans
- Processing and calculation of pensions
- Employment-related issues: options, prospects, limitations, etc.
- Social integration of war veterans
- Opportunities for education and retraining
- Specifics of financial support under the "Turbota" programme
- Undergoing military medical commissions and medical and social expert commissions
- Psychological assistance and support
- Housing-related issues (registration on housing waiting lists, preparation of documentation packages, etc.)
- Land-related issues
- Access to veterans' sports (gyms, competitions).

It is important to note that surveyed CSO representatives and Case Management Specialists also emphasized that war **veterans primarily seek to be heard and seen**. As a result, they often come not so much with a specific problem or request, but rather to talk, share updates, feel emotional closeness and support, and spend time among "their own".

Requests from the families of war veterans largely overlap with those of the veterans themselves. At the same time, several specific issues are added:

- Clarification of rights, opportunities, and procedures for accessing benefits and payments for families of military personnel (housing and utility, social, medical, etc.)
- Obtaining the status of a family member of a servicemember (including fallen or missing defenders)
- Medical issues, rehabilitation, recovery, and prosthetics relevant to family members who participated in the war
- Psychological support and counselling for families of war veterans, including guidance on behaviour, communication, and adaptation (how to talk, how to support, etc.)

- Education and recreational opportunities for children of war veterans (education benefits, school meals, participation in children's camps, etc.)
- Family recreation, leisure, sports, and cultural programmes
- Guidance and assistance in searching for missing servicemembers, updates on search progress, and support related to delays in DNA examinations
- Advice on commemoration and petition initiatives (for families of fallen defenders)
- Assistance in obtaining electronic extracts and certificates through digital services ("Diia", Ministry of Internal Affairs website)
- Accompaniment in public institutions (a core function of case management specialists).

Regarding **whether the above-mentioned requests of war veterans and their families are currently resolved positively**, respondents do not provide a unanimous assessment. On the one hand, authorities are actively working to improve veterans' services, and in many cases these requests are addressed positively – provided that there are legal grounds and applicants have submitted the required documentation. Experimental projects introducing new service delivery models are also being implemented (for example, cooperation between ASCs and the Pension Fund).

On the other hand, despite the large number of initiatives aimed at supporting war veterans, some of them exist only on paper, while in practice many issues related to social support and adaptation of war veterans are delayed or remain unresolved altogether. A lack of systematic approaches to addressing veterans' requests is often observed, and some state guarantees are not fulfilled due to limited resources – an issue more frequently highlighted by veterans' policy experts and CSO representatives. They also note that the effectiveness of problem resolution largely depends on specific individuals, institutions, or communities: in some cases responses are constructive, while in others they are limited to formal replies. This is particularly relevant for communities located farther from regional centres, which objectively have less access to services and programmes.

It is notable that, whereas experts and government officials often cite limited funding or narrow mandates as the main barriers to addressing veterans' requests, Case Management Specialists and CSO representatives tend to attribute these difficulties to insufficient competence within public institutions and broader systemic inefficiencies.

CSO representatives address these challenges by providing comprehensive support to war veterans, primarily informational, legal, and psychological, through consultations, meetings, and seminars, as well as through cooperation with other organizations and professionals. Some organizations operate multi-level legal support systems for war veterans, combining in-house lawyers, partner organizations (Right to Protection, Pryntsy, Legal Hundred), and private attorneys. Thanks to this network-based model, the majority of war veterans' requests are addressed successfully and in a comprehensive manner.

At the same time, surveyed CSO representatives emphasize that it is impossible to fully satisfy all requests, as many of them fall beyond the capacity of the civil society sector and lie within the competence of state authorities (for example, housing and land issues). In addition, available resources are not always sufficient to meet all needs.

With regard to funding, CSOs participating in the study most often receive support from international organizations and grant programmes, as well as from charitable organizations, private businesses, and individual donors. Specific donors mentioned include the EU, the United States Department of State, the UN, IOM, IREX,

ISAR “Yednannia”, the International Renaissance Foundation, MHP, and the Shpyha Foundation. Respondents also noted that they have had experience with, or continue to receive, funding from municipal and state budgets.

“I would like to feel support both from the state and from municipal budgets.”

Respondent 1 (hereinafter – R), female, 49 years old, Donetsk region (CSO representative)

Overall, the majority of surveyed Case Management Specialists and CSO representatives believe that since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the nature of requests from war veterans to public authorities has not fundamentally changed, and the main areas and challenges have remained the same. However, due to the scale of the war, there has been a significant increase both in the number of war veterans and in the volume of needs related to physical rehabilitation, prosthetics, psychological support, and related services. As a result, a substantial rise in the number of requests has been observed, along with increased complexity of cases and a growing need for comprehensive case-by-case support, which places considerable strain on the veterans’ support system.

Among the significant changes, respondents also pointed to the emergence of new categories of war veterans, including IDPs and individuals released from captivity, which has generated additional challenges for the system. After 2022, many truly complex and emotionally demanding requests have appeared: war veterans and/or their relatives often seek assistance with documentation and rights related to loss, captivity, missing persons, or fallen defenders.

“Before 2022, there were not so many severe injuries, and now continued rehabilitation after hospitalization is needed.”

R1, female, 49 years old, Donetsk region (CSO representative)

Respondents also noted that the number of support opportunities and programmes has increased, cooperation between the state, business, and the civil society sector has intensified, and war veterans themselves have shown greater interest in coming together for mutual support and self-realization through physical activity and entrepreneurship.

“These issues have become much more complex, much more profound, and are more about grief and pain than about obtaining something, some kind of benefit.”

R10, male, 45 years old, Volyn region (CSO representative)

Assessment of Social Protection, Accessibility, and Quality of Services for War Veterans

With regard to the accessibility of services for war veterans, respondents note a significant improvement in both accessibility and quality of medical services over the past year, including as a result of support provided by CSOs. Specific improvements include the expansion of the range of medical services, broader territorial coverage of medical facilities providing services to war veterans, and increased accessibility through free rehabilitation programmes, particularly at the local level, accessible primary examinations, prosthetics (provision, replacement, and repair), and the opening of modern rehabilitation centres. At the same time, respondents pointed to several shortcomings, including problems in the implementation of the “Affordable Medicines” programme, a lack of high-

quality psychological support, an insufficient number of rehabilitation departments, and challenges related to the provision of sanatorium and health resort treatment.

At the same time, a large number of issues in the fields of social services (excessive paperwork and bureaucracy) and legal services (limited availability of free legal aid, incompetence and lack of integrity among some lawyers) for war veterans remain complex and insufficiently regulated, despite the establishment of new state institutions. Although services formally exist, information about them is often lacking. In some cases, war veterans are forced to defend their rights in court, and the more materially significant the issue (such as housing provision), the more difficult it is to resolve.

Among the factors that generally indicate improved accessibility of services for war veterans in recent years, respondents highlighted the establishment of dedicated units or responsible staff for working with war veterans in most organizations, the introduction of the “single window” for veterans in ASCs, the creation of the position of Case Management Specialist, the opening of veterans’ spaces and hubs, active volunteer engagement, and the digitalization process (in particular, “Dii”, including the eVeteran section, which simplifies documentation procedures). Respondents also noted reforms within public authorities, such as the possibility of obtaining a UBD extract through ASCs rather than submitting requests to the TCC or the Ministry of Veterans Affairs.

Overall, according to respondents, there is a sense that changes have occurred not only at the level of public institutions, but also within civil society itself: people have begun to show greater respect towards war veterans compared to the period prior to 2022.

As for the accessibility of services provided by NGOs, respondents noted that in the vast majority of cases such services are accessible, and that this level has clearly improved – or at least not deteriorated – compared to the period before 2022, as veterans’ policy has become a state priority. In particular, respondents emphasized that the volume of available services, especially informational, legal, and psychological support, has increased since 2022. There are now more opportunities, more organizations, and more formats of assistance, including mobile and remote services, as well as increased international support and a growing number of donors.

*“Before 2022, there was very little; now it’s like night and day.”
R6, female, 34 years old, Vinnytsia region (CSO representative)*

*“I am convinced that services are definitely more accessible now than before,
and that a person who realizes they need a service can actually obtain it.”
R9, female, 33 years old, Vinnytsia region (CSO representative)*

In the near future, interview participants predominantly anticipate positive changes in service provision for war veterans. These expectations primarily relate to the further expansion of available services – especially those delivered directly through communities and ASCs, enabling war veterans to access support locally – as well as improvements in service quality and accessibility, continued simplification of procedures, and expanded access to information, particularly through digitalization. Respondents also expect progress in employment opportunities for war veterans, especially in the small and medium-sized business sector, including the adoption of dedicated legislation on veteran

entrepreneurship. Further anticipated developments include the expansion and continued professional training of Case Management Specialists (with mandatory provision of fair pay), resolution of long-standing issues related to sanatorium and health resort treatment, increased trust in psychological services, and the development of effective mechanisms for psychological adaptation of war veterans and their families. Separate expectations were expressed regarding expanded support for war veterans with disabilities, particularly in the areas of adaptation, rehabilitation, and retraining, as well as the introduction of inclusive and barrier-free systems. Respondents also hope for increased attention to the issues of missing persons and individuals released from captivity.

In addition, interviewees anticipate an increase in the number of social workers involved in veterans support, alongside a reduction in paper-based administrative processes. Multidisciplinary teams – typically consisting of a lawyer, a social work (case management) specialist, and a psychologist – are expected to become more widespread, providing comprehensive support to war veterans. Changes in the education system are also anticipated, including the introduction of specialized training programmes based on a veteran-centric approach.

At the same time, respondents emphasize that the current benefits system requires regulatory renewal, including revision of the benefits list, alternative implementation mechanisms (for example, monetization), and greater efficiency, flexibility, and timeliness in service delivery. Given the growing number of war veterans, the existing model is widely perceived as unsustainable, and changes to payment mechanisms are expected for both active service members and war veterans.

Assessments of the quality of social protection for war veterans vary. The majority of respondents acknowledge that although services formally exist and are provided, there is a strong demand for more efficient, higher-quality, and faster support – characterized by reduced bureaucracy and delays, increased funding, and improved accessibility, particularly in remote communities. A smaller group of respondents considers the quality of veterans' social protection to be relatively high, noting that services are accessible to those entitled to them and actively seeking assistance. Such views were more common among experts, although similar opinions were expressed across all target groups. At the same time, a number of respondents – particularly Case Management Specialists and CSO representatives – assess the current system as mediocre. According to these views, the benefits system is outdated, overly fragmented, and largely ineffective; many benefits are either not implemented in practice, underutilized, or misaligned with the actual needs of war veterans. The system is characterized by complexity and lack of clarity, while war veterans often lack sufficient awareness, engagement, and support, and the system itself suffers from a shortage of qualified specialists and adequate funding.

“We have been at war for eleven years, yet we are still using an old law with ‘dead’ provisions that simply do not work.”

R6, female, 34 years old, Vinnytsia region (CSO representative)

Importantly, war veterans themselves tend to be quite restrained in their assessments. In their view, the system functions either satisfactorily or rather mediocly and requires substantial improvement. The fewest problems are noted with obtaining statuses, while the greatest challenges arise in the process of receiving payments (especially for relatives of missing service members), as well as in housing and land provision. Access to benefits is assessed as roughly fifty-fifty: generally accessible, but not for everyone and not always, and often not corresponding to the promised scope – particularly with regard to utility discounts.

“At the high level, there are many promises and many guarantees. But the level of implementation varies... veterans themselves complain about a lack of fairness in the processes... sometimes they cannot obtain a simple certificate... Most people do receive services and everything is fine, but there are many unfortunate cases that shape the overall picture. In theory, everything looks good, but in practice – not so much.”

R1, male, 45 years old, Vinnytsia region (expert)

Assessment of the Effectiveness of Statuses, Benefits, and Payments

Respondents identified the following statuses, benefits, and payments as the most useful for war veterans:

- UBD status and status of a person with a disability resulting from the war
- benefits for housing and utility payments
- financial assistance and compensation payments related to injuries, loss of work capacity, and/or disability
- medical support, including prosthetics, rehabilitation, sanatorium treatment, psychological support, and medicines
- access to housing, particularly relevant for war veterans who are IDPs or those who lost their homes due to hostilities, as well as compensation for housing rent
- free education for war veterans and their children
- employment programmes and grants for starting a business
- one-time financial assistance for special merits to the state
- an additional two-week leave entitlement.

“Benefits for housing and utility payments are what people most often come to us for...

I believe this is currently the most useful benefit.”

R12, female, 37 years old, Chernihiv region (expert)

Thus, for war veterans, the most important forms of support were identified as obtaining UBD status, utility benefits, and medical support programmes (including psychological support). Housing provision, education-related benefits, payments for war veterans with disabilities, and grant programmes were also mentioned.

“You know, in this case it is probably not so much about which specific benefit is useful or which status exists – what they really need is attention. And when they come to us and we explain what support is available – that their children can receive health and recreation support, that their spouse can participate in certain programmes, that the whole family can access benefits – you can see a spark appear in their eyes. A sense that someone actually cares about them,”

R11, female, 58 years old, Dnipropetrovsk region (experts)

At the same time, most respondents acknowledge that all components of social protection for war veterans are necessary and meaningful, and that even symbolic financial assistance represents a sign of recognition and respect. As noted by respondents, “the more services and benefits are available, the better it is for veterans.” However, not all benefits are easily accessible or transparent in practice, nor are they equally available to all categories of war

veterans. In some cases, certain benefits are perceived as an inefficient use of public funds, and by some veterans even as demeaning.

Among the least effective statuses, benefits, and payments, respondents most frequently identified the following:

- Public transport benefits, which are often not recognized or honoured by transport providers, do not adequately cover actual costs, and are not equally relevant for all veterans (particularly in communities with irregular transport services or in small towns and villages); respondents repeatedly expressed a preference for the monetization of transport benefits
- Free legal aid and legal services, due to long waiting times and lower perceived quality compared to paid legal assistance
- Benefits related to the provision of vehicles for persons with disabilities, which in practice do not function due to a lack of funding and effective implementation mechanisms
- The “Affordable Medicines” programme
- One-off payments for Independence Day
- Installation of radio points or landline telephones, which have largely lost relevance
- Housing benefits and compensation schemes that are effectively non-functional due to their complexity, lengthy procedures, and emotional burden on applicants; as well as housing capital repair programmes that are rarely implemented due to insufficient funding
- Discounts for theatre, circus, and similar cultural events, which are not available everywhere and suffer from low awareness among the target audience

“It is shameful for the state to offer a defender one thousand hryvnias (UAH) for Independence Day – it is absurd,”

R1, male, 45 years old, Vinnytsia region (experts)

“It is important not merely to provide financial payments, but to help a veteran find their place in the professional sphere and feel like a dignified member of society,”

R1, female, 49 years old, Donetsk region (CSO representative)

Among the programmes that war veterans themselves most frequently identified as least effective, transport benefits and Independence Day payments were mentioned most often. Veterans also considered business grant programmes to be of low effectiveness due to the lack of proper mentoring and follow-up support. Similarly, sanatorium-based treatment and psychological rehabilitation were assessed as insufficient, as they fail to cover the full range of needs and often do not ensure adequate quality of care. Benefits related to priority installation of landline telephones were also perceived as outdated and ineffective.

Housing-related initiatives were described as particularly controversial. Despite the significant time, effort, and emotional strain required to prepare documentation, such programmes rarely lead to tangible outcomes. This applied both to housing waiting lists and to compensation schemes for lost housing, which respondents noted are characterized by lengthy procedures and limited practical impact.

Assessment of Experience in Accessing Administrative Service Centres and Public Authorities

From a practical perspective, war veterans most frequently approached Administrative Service Centres for issues related to obtaining UBD status, recognition of disability resulting from the war and the corresponding pension, placement on housing waiting lists, participation in the “Own Home” programme (for housing repairs), receipt of the annual one-off Independence Day payment, as well as the processing of subsidies and utility benefits, land-related issues, and vehicle customs clearance benefits..

Among other institutions with which veterans interacted over the past three years, respondents most often mentioned the Pension Fund, healthcare facilities, military enlistment offices, military units, village councils, and the Social Protection Fund. The primary reasons for engaging with these institutions included pension-related matters, benefits and subsidies, as well as the issuance and/or restoration of documents or legal statuses.

When describing challenges encountered while applying to public authorities for statuses, benefits, or payments, war veterans most frequently referred to excessive bureaucracy, insufficient funding, and indifference on the part of officials. The vast majority of respondents highlighted the large number of required documents, certificates, and institutions that must be visited, which significantly delays administrative procedures. As a result, many cases remain unresolved or are substantially prolonged – a concern also echoed by experts in veterans’ policy. Respondents further reported a lack of respect, disregard, formalistic replies, poor communication, and, in some cases, a complete absence of willingness to assist on the part of public officials.

“They cannot even greet people properly or explain which documents are required – this is the most common problem,”

R1, female, 49 years old, Donetsk region (CSO representative)

“When the process drags on for months, it is understandable that almost everyone stops trying to apply again,”

R7, female, 43 years old, Zaporizhzhia region (Case Management Specialists)

Among the specific problems encountered by war veterans when dealing with public authorities, respondents identified the following:

- excessive bureaucracy, forcing veterans to “move from office to office”
- lack of ethical and respectful communication by officials
- confusion between paper-based and electronic documentation, as well as unclear procedural requirements
- difficulties in obtaining documents from military units, particularly those located in active combat zones
- lack of objectivity in medical and social assessment procedures, especially in the process of disability determination
- complications in receiving one-off disability-related payments due to inconsistencies in military records and conclusions of the Military Medical Commission.
- difficulties in processing payments to families of fallen service members due to disputed distribution of funds among relatives
- challenges in restoring documents after captivity and delays in payments to former prisoners of war
- errors in pension calculations, resulting in underpayment
- lack of funding for sanatorium-based treatment despite legally guaranteed entitlements

- inability to obtain multiple statuses simultaneously, which affects the total amount of benefits
- limited access to social services due to the downsizing of local social protection offices
- violations of legislation by commanders of military units, forcing veterans to seek legal assistance and pursue court cases
- low physical accessibility of institutions for persons with disabilities, particularly in the regions.

Regarding interactions specifically with ASCs and other institutions, the issues most frequently raised by war veterans concerned documentation requirements and submission procedures. At the same time, it is important to note that around half of the surveyed war veterans reported no problems either in their interactions with ASCs or when engaging with other institutions.

In turn, **Case Management Specialists identified the following public institutions as the most challenging to work with:**

- military units, military enlistment offices, Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centres (TRCs), Military Medical Commissions, and ECOPFO
- the Pension Fund
- healthcare system institutions
- local self-government bodies (city of Lviv)
- housing provision departments
- the Social Protection Fund.

In the context of cooperation with public authorities, respondents pointed to such issues as excessive formalism, indifferent attitudes, lack of tolerance and empathy, low interest in outcomes, and insufficient professionalism.

“The Military Medical Commission and certain units of the Territorial Recruitment Centres (TRCs) demonstrate appalling treatment of people – there is absolutely no tolerance, no patience whatsoever,”
R5, female, 34 years old, Dnipropetrovsk region (Case Management Specialists)

At the same time, respondents note that certain steps to address these issues have been taken by the state, although progress remains slow and not always effective. Among the positive developments, respondents mentioned the introduction of new programmes, the organization of forums and policy dialogues at the national level, the provision of consultations through Administrative Service Centres (ASCs), the availability of online resources (official government websites), training for specialists, information campaigns on legislative changes – particularly in the area of veteran employment – and the establishment of municipal institutions such as VeteranPro. However, under the current conditions, these measures are considered critically insufficient, and respondents emphasized that the issue requires greater prioritization, visibility, and urgency at the policy level.

One of the most successful examples of effective state-led responses identified by respondents was the introduction of the Case Management Specialist role for war veterans, along with the expansion of electronic services and digitalization of administrative processes, including the submission of documents through ASCs and the “Diia” digital platform.

With regard to civil society organizations, their representatives noted that they help war veterans address the above-mentioned challenges by acting as intermediaries between veterans and public authorities. CSOs also facilitate access to, or provide contacts of, lawyers and other specialists, offer consultations on the collection and/or preparation of documentation, and assist in developing case-specific action plans. Respondents also mentioned awareness-raising and capacity-building activities targeting professionals (for example, healthcare workers) who work with war veterans, particularly in relation to ethics and psychological aspects of communication.

In general terms, the primary request for change in the work of responsible public authorities with regard to the provision of statuses, benefits, and payments for war veterans concerns the overall simplification of the system. The key proposals articulated by respondents include the following:

- conducting an in-depth review of the current system, including the revision or elimination of ineffective legal provisions, benefits, and payments
- increasing the level of legal awareness among war veterans and the general population
- introducing administrative liability for public officials for ignoring or failing to respond to veterans' requests
- establishing prosecutorial oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance with the law in the field of veterans' policy
- improving the Unified State Register of War Veterans to ensure it contains comprehensive data by region and status and is used as a tool for financial planning
- strengthening coordination and communication among public authorities, as well as between public, civil society, and private sector actors
- automating and digitalizing procedures, including the introduction of full electronic document management
- creating a digital veteran account to enable the convenient submission of documents and applications and access to consultations (legal, psychological, and other types)
- ensuring that all relevant information is available through a single website or portal, including the development of a unified database and/or practical guide to services for war veterans
- simplifying bureaucratic procedures and documentation requirements, including streamlining application processes, easing rigid controls over the validity periods of certificates (including calls to revise certificate validity periods in "Diiia"), shortening the time required to issue documents in military units and Territorial Recruitment Centres (TRCs), reducing the overall number of certificates, and ensuring their full digitalization
- changing institutional attitudes towards service members and war veterans within military units, TRCs, and related structures
- addressing funding gaps in certain veterans' policy initiatives through greater engagement of local community resources
- ensuring equal access to services for war veterans across communities
- establishing systems for the remote retrieval of documents from military units, particularly those located in active combat zones
- engaging qualified and empathetic professionals to work with war veterans and members of their families

"When there is a sufficient number of specialists, they are empathetic"

and have established links with public authorities, issues are resolved quickly and effectively,”

R1, female, 49 years old, Donetsk region (CSO representative)

In turn, recommendations voiced by war veterans themselves most frequently related to the following areas: medical care (greater emphasis on medical programmes for war veterans, the introduction of priority service pathways in hospitals, and accountability mechanisms for poor-quality care or inappropriate treatment by medical staff); pension policy (increasing the level of veterans' pensions); procedures for obtaining UBD status (simplification and reduction of delays); housing programmes; and transport benefits (introduction of benefits for intercity travel and monetization of transport benefits). Occasionally, respondents also expressed the need for a deeper, more individualized approach to veterans' problems, as well as for the integration of all veteran-related services in a single location in order to simplify case resolution.

With regard to changes in the operation ASCs and other institutions, the main request from war veterans was to reduce excessive paperwork and, consequently, long queues and waiting times. This includes simplifying documentation requirements and providing practical assistance with document preparation, introducing electronic submission of documents, ensuring full automation and digitalization of processes, synchronizing electronic services, and storing all documents within a single, unified database. Additional requests included the provision of clear, step-by-step guidance by responsible authorities and the faster execution of administrative procedures.

Among the proposals for **changes in the work of Case Management Specialists** that could enhance the effectiveness of their work, respondents highlighted the following:

- to develop and implement more effective, evidence-based approaches to working with war veterans and their families
- to revise the recruitment and appointment procedures for Case Management Specialists, including, where appropriate, the involvement of veteran communities in staff selection
- to increase salaries for professionals who work directly with war veterans, families of fallen service members, and families of those missing in action
- to optimize reporting requirements, for example by replacing weekly reports with monthly reporting
- to introduce additional training programmes for newly appointed Case Management Specialists and expand opportunities for continuous professional development, with the involvement of institutions responsible for veterans' policy
- to expand the mandate for representing veterans' interests, allowing issues to be resolved without the veteran's physical presence, particularly in cases involving veterans with disabilities
- to promote a team-based approach, whereby Case Management Specialists work alongside lawyers and psychologists
- to organize online meetings, conferences, and methodological guidance aimed at improving the quality of advisory and consultation support for war veterans.

Respondents learn about changes in legislation and regulatory acts related to statuses, benefits, and payments from official websites and pages of public authorities, in particular the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Cabinet of

Ministers of Ukraine, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, the Union of Veterans, the Liga:Zakon legal portal, as well as from publications by colleagues and lawyers on social media. Information on legislative changes is also disseminated by heads of regional departments (through official letters and meetings). For Case Management Specialists and experts, there are dedicated professional chats, as well as training sessions and online meetings. Experts working in the field of veterans' policy also refer to the State Employment Service, the Pension Fund of Ukraine, and regular meetings with the Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, Iryna Vereshchuk. Respondents also mentioned the "Diia" platform: the eVeteran section consolidates comprehensive and accessible information on issues relevant to war veterans. Representatives of civil society organizations also refer to regular digests produced by the coalition of veterans' spaces. They additionally note that their organizations often employ an in-house lawyer responsible for monitoring legislative changes, as, in addition to the need to provide relevant assistance within the legal framework, this is in itself an important reputational issue for their organizations. In this context, war veterans more frequently referred to the internet (social media and official websites of public authorities) and to their social circles (friends, former comrades, etc.) as key sources of information.

Housing Provision for War Veterans

Among the existing **housing provision programmes** for war veterans, respondents mentioned the following:

- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 719, which provides monetary compensation for housing to war veterans with Group I-II disabilities and internally displaced persons who are or were Participants in Hostilities (mentioned most frequently); as well as Resolutions No. 280, No. 1176, and No. 252
- local (municipal and regional) co-financing programmes
- the individual rural housing construction programme "Own Home"
- the "eOselia" programme
- preferential loans, including mortgages at interest rates of 3% and 7%, as well as regional credit programmes
- regional funds supporting rural housing construction
- housing waiting lists
- 50/50 housing co-financing schemes (applicable to war veterans with Group III disabilities and persons who have lost work capacity without a recognized disability)
- compensation for rented housing costs

Among the war veterans interviewed during the in-depth interviews (10 respondents), four reported a need to improve their housing conditions; however, only two of them had been registered on a housing waiting list. One respondent had already improved their housing conditions through the "Own Home" programme.

With regard to the effectiveness of housing programmes, respondents expressed a significant degree of skepticism. While the initiative itself is generally assessed positively, respondents noted that housing needs far exceed

available capacities: existing resources (financial and housing stock) do not meet actual demand. For example, programmes implemented under Resolution No. 719 are considered relatively effective; however, respondents emphasized the need for additional funding and shorter waiting times. Other shortcomings include the fact that compensation amounts do not always correspond to real housing prices or the actual needs of war veterans (for example, rent compensation is provided only for six months, after which further steps remain unclear). Importantly, the greatest skepticism was expressed by war veterans themselves, as well as by representatives of civil society organizations.

“It would be desirable to have something better that corresponds to current living realities, rather than what is simply prescribed on paper.”
R12, female, 37 years old, Chernihiv region (expert)

With regard to housing waiting lists, respondents frequently pointed to excessive bureaucratic barriers, including an overabundance of certificates with very limited validity periods, the complexity and lack of clarity of procedural requirements, and certain restrictive criteria (for example, the requirement to have no more than 6 square meters of housing per person, which creates practical difficulties). Respondents also highlighted the limited range of eligible participant categories allowed to take part in the programme.

Logically, when asked about ways to improve the housing provision system for war veterans, respondents across all categories primarily recommended increasing funding for housing programmes, which they identified as the cornerstone of most implementation challenges. Other recommendations included:

- developing veterans' cooperative movements, including housing cooperatives with the involvement of communities, donor funding, and veterans' own contributions
- simplifying document submission procedures for registration on housing waiting lists
- consolidating documentation procedures for housing programme applications into a single access point
- revising the definition of “housing adequacy” in the Housing Code; abolishing (or increasing) the 6 square meter norm and granting registration rights to all war veterans who do not have suitable housing (taking into account individual housing circumstances, even if family members own shares in housing, and not depriving such war veterans of the right to be placed on housing waiting lists)
- harmonizing standards for calculating housing space and housing costs across regions
- introducing housing purchase credit schemes with options for early repayment, flexible loan terms, fixed amounts in hryvnias, and reduced interest rates
- simplifying housing purchase procedures with compensation mechanisms
- introducing a system of monetary housing certificates enabling war veterans to independently purchase housing of their choice
- construction of state-owned housing
- expanding the categories of war veterans eligible for housing support (including war veterans with Group III disabilities, internally displaced Participants in Hostilities, and foreign defenders who do not own housing in

Ukraine, while maintaining priority for war veterans with disabilities, IDPs, and those who have lost their housing)

- revising compensation requirements, particularly in cases where housing formally exists but is unfit for habitation
- increasing the share of state funding within the “eOselia” programme and involving local authorities in co-financing
- reducing waiting times for housing allocation for war veterans
- providing more flexible options and mechanisms (for example, partial co-payments or monetary compensation allowing veterans to choose the location of housing purchase)
- strengthening state oversight of housing provision processes.

Assessment of Legal Services for War Veterans

According to interview participants, war veterans most frequently require legal support in the following areas and situations:

- awareness of their rights
- undergoing the Military Medical Commission and the Medical and Social Expert Commission
- obtaining certificates from military units and Territorial Recruitment Centres
- appealing decisions of public authorities and institutions (including the Military Medical Commission and the Medical and Social Expert Commission)
- obtaining the status of a Participant in Hostilities and disability group status
- issues related to financial allowances (particularly for those undergoing treatment and/or rehabilitation after injuries) and the implementation of medical guarantees (including cases of delayed payments)
- receiving inadequate payments after release from captivity
- legality of pension calculation and recalculation
- discharge from military service
- housing provision
- obtaining one-time financial assistance
- inclusion in registers
- land and housing disputes
- inheritance procedures, particularly for families of fallen service members
- prosthetics-related issues
- payments for starting one’s own business
- proving kinship or circumstances of death of service members
- establishment of disability status
- obtaining payments and documents from military units after discharge from service
- reinstatement in education after military service
- family disputes, divorce, division of property, etc.

War veterans themselves emphasize the need for legal support in matters related to deferment from service and undergoing the Military Medical Commission, obtaining disability status, processing and/or restoring documents and certificates, accessing social payments and benefits (including housing- and land-related benefits), and resolving medical issues (including access to rehabilitation). Veterans also reported requests for clarification of their rights and entitlements.

With regard to the accessibility of legal services for war veterans, respondents generally believe that such services are available overall: war veterans may seek free legal assistance from various state institutions (including the Commissioner for the Rights of Servicemen, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, etc.), lawyers employed by municipal institutions, the system of free legal aid (including advocates), charitable organizations, and human rights groups (such as "Sich"). War veterans themselves also consider these services to be relatively accessible.

"As long as there is willingness, because some steps no one can take on behalf of a veteran."

R10, male, 45 years old, Volyn region (CSO representative)

At the same time, a number of limitations exist. The main one is an insufficient number of competent specialists, particularly in remote communities. Another challenge relates not so much to access to legal services as to certain aspects of the implementation of war veterans' rights – namely, how quickly and effectively decisions are carried out following legal advice and consultations. In addition, free legal services often lag behind paid services in terms of quality, while free services frequently involve long waiting times and generally lack a personalized approach. Other aspects of this issue were also highlighted. For example, secondary legal aid (court representation and preparation of legal claims) is often available only on a paid basis or involves extremely long waiting periods in state legal aid centres.

As a result, the system of free legal support for war veterans can be described as fragmented and dependent on limited resources – human, time-related, and financial.

"They are accessible only to a limited extent. If there are only 5–10 qualified lawyers and a large number of veterans, they simply cannot process all cases, and veterans have to wait in long queues."

R5, female, 36 years old, Khmelnytskyi region (expert)

Experts working in the field of veterans' policy tend to express more positive views on this issue.

Among all surveyed war veterans, only a few were unaware of their right to receive all types of legal assistance free of charge. However, even among those who are aware of this service, not all know where and how it can be accessed. Overall, respondents mentioned hotlines operated by district and regional administrations, legal or notary offices, the Union of Veterans, the Veterans' House, internet resources (without specifying particular platforms), and Derzhprom (Kharkiv).

Half of the surveyed war veterans had sought free legal assistance. Issues addressed included housing matters, a lawsuit related to protection of honour and dignity, medical treatment, and document processing (resolved), as well as issues related to the exercise of rights within homeowners' associations (not resolved). Those war veterans whose cases were resolved positively reported satisfaction with the legal services received.

Only two of the surveyed war veterans had sought paid legal assistance (one of whom had previously indicated being unaware of the existence of free legal services). Both cases related to payment issues, and in neither case was

the issue resolved. In terms of financial impact, respondents described the cost of legal services as “unpleasant” for their household budgets.

Among the specific problems faced by war veterans when accessing legal services, respondents cited the high cost of paid services, insufficient information and long queues for state-provided legal aid, and a lack of interaction between lawyers and military units.

It is important to note that the level of distrust towards free legal services is not high; however, there is a need for better information dissemination, awareness-raising activities, and a more systematic approach to implementation.

Among the proposed changes to the work of relevant institutions, respondents emphasized the need to:

- increase the number of lawyers and legal aid providers and strengthen state support for non-governmental organizations to improve service accessibility
- increase remuneration for staff working within the free legal aid system
- public authorities need to work consistently and efficiently
- establish expert groups composed of war veterans who are lawyers to develop practical proposals for change and submit them to the government or relevant ministries
- create a system of consultants or veterans’ hubs as an intermediary link between war veterans and public authorities
- ensure the availability of comprehensive legal consultations online
- continuously improve lawyers’ competence, particularly in the field of military law
- strengthen oversight of compliance with legal ethics
- increase accountability for fraud related to legal services for war veterans
- establish a dedicated association of lawyers (or a unit within a public authority) specializing exclusively in military-related issues
- extend the working hours of free legal aid services until 6:00 p.m.
- allocate state budget funds to cover the cost of legal services provided by a lawyer chosen by the war veteran
- create a unified system or hotline for consultations on legal issues affecting war veterans, integrated with an online portal, chatbot, and telephone service (for those who do not use digital services or prefer personal communication)
- issue informational leaflets outlining the legal rights of war veterans together with the UBD certificate

“A lawyer must be professional, delicate, and humane.”

R1, male, 54 years old, Odesa region (war veteran)

Assessment of the Status of Implementation of the State Veterans Policy Strategy

With regard to challenges in the implementation of veterans’ policy, as in previous sections, the main shortcoming identified by respondents is insufficient funding. It is evident that the number of war veterans and the volume of their needs are growing faster than the capacity of the state and local communities to respond. At the

same time, respondents repeatedly expressed the view that funding is in fact sufficient, but that public authorities often attempt to shift responsibility for their shortcomings and lack of competence by referring to financial constraints. Another frequently mentioned issue is that veterans' policy remains largely focused on financial payments rather than on developing the potential of war veterans within communities.

Among other **key challenges in the implementation of veterans' policy**, respondents highlighted the following:

- lack of coordination between central and local authorities and civil society organizations, resulting in fragmented approaches and competition for resources
- absence of a clear understanding of the needs, number, and profiles of war veterans, which makes effective policy planning impossible
- low awareness among war veterans of their rights and opportunities to access benefits and services
- shortage of qualified personnel at the local level (often due to low remuneration), as well as lack of professionalism and indifference among staff
- the need to promote and popularize a positive image of the veteran as a “normal”, non-problematic and non-aggressive individual, and to prevent avoidance and isolation of war veterans
- employment and retraining of war veterans
- accessibility of medical care and treatment (including sanatorium treatment, rehabilitation, and prosthetics)
- housing provision challenges (including the failure to fulfil state commitments)
- accessibility and inclusion issues for war veterans with disabilities
- support for veterans' entrepreneurship
- insufficient institutionalization of veterans' policy at the community level and the absence of dedicated structural units responsible for its implementation
- insufficient involvement of all relevant institutions and authorities at the community level
- limited access to quality services within communities and shortages of personnel at the local level (given that a relatively large number of war veterans reside in communities)
- lack of effective communication between public authorities and the veteran's community

“More often than not, this veteran's policy is more visionary than practical.”

R2, male, 29 years old, Vinnytsia region (expert)

“Veterans policy should be cross-cutting, because veterans are everywhere and all areas of life affect them.”

R6, female, 34 years old, Vinnytsia region (CSO representative)

War veterans themselves identify among the main challenges the lack of psychological readiness to interact with war veterans – both in society at large and within certain public institutions – as well as frequent prejudice and, at times, negative attitudes towards war veterans among the general population.

Primary responsibility for the implementation of veterans' policy is most often assigned to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, as it is perceived to set the overall tone and direction of activities (respondents noted that its performance is significantly better than during the period of the Anti-Terrorist Operation). At the same time, most respondents agree that responsibility for veterans' policy **implementation lies with all ministries, as war veterans use services provided across the entire public administration system**. In this context, respondents mentioned the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the Ministry of Youth

and Sports, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economy, and the Ministry of Digital Transformation, among others. They also referred to the State Employment Service, the Pension Fund of Ukraine, local self-government bodies, regional and district veterans' affairs departments, Territorial Recruitment Centres, heads of communities, local veterans' policy focal points, Administrative Service Centres, patronage services and social support specialists within security institutions, as well as veterans' unions, spaces, and centres.

According to the overwhelming majority of respondents across all categories, public authorities responsible for implementing veterans' policy have sufficient formal powers. Ultimately, much depends on individuals – their level of empathy, initiative, and willingness to be useful. Respondents also noted that while formal authority may be sufficient, competencies are sometimes lacking. In addition, the system is currently undergoing restructuring, which requires time.

“The system works, but its effectiveness ultimately depends on the people working at the local level.”

R4, male, 39 years old, Poltava region (Case Management Specialist)

With regard to the powers of Case Management Specialists, most respondents believe that these are insufficient to effectively represent the interests of war veterans in interactions with various institutions, which limits the effectiveness of their work and to some extent hinders the implementation of veterans' policy. Specialists often encounter indifference from representatives of different authorities and institutions and report that they are not listened to or taken seriously. In some cases, Case Management Specialists are not known at all at the local level. At the same time, respondents noted that the situation is gradually improving.

As for the role of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, respondents believe it should be central to both the formulation and implementation of state policy concerning war veterans and their family members. In essence, the Ministry should serve as a coordinating body, aligning the activities of all relevant institutions, including security sector bodies, and ensuring a unified approach to legal and regulatory frameworks affecting war veterans. It is seen as a change leader that should define priorities within veterans' policy.

Among the functions respondents assign to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs are:

- development of a national strategy and standards for societal attitudes towards war veterans, as well as standards for the level and quality of services they should receive
- guaranteeing the rights of war veterans and providing support to them and their families
- shaping the public image and profile of war veterans
- ensuring social protection of war veterans and facilitating their integration into society, including identifying new opportunities and mechanisms for support
- responding to violations of relevant legislation and conducting legal assessments
- ensuring the practical implementation of decisions at all levels (from large cities to small communities), with a focus on monitoring real conditions rather than reported figures alone
- maintaining close contact and coordination with all authorized bodies, units, and actors at the local level
- monitoring the effective and timely implementation of initiatives and programmes
- continuously enhancing the competencies and professionalism of Ministry staff

According to war veterans, the Ministry should already be focusing on preparations for the post-war period by developing a vision and strategy for addressing the challenges that will arise following the return of large numbers of war veterans from the war. Respondents also emphasized that the Ministry should engage in direct communication with war veterans in order to genuinely understand their needs and challenges, and act as an advocate for war veterans across all state institutions.

With regard to the initiative to introduce the institution of Case Management Specialists, assessments are overwhelmingly positive. Respondents noted that this initiative creates a bridge between war veterans, communities, and public authorities. Case Management Specialists facilitate access to services for war veterans, provide informational support, actively assist with certificates and documentation, support the resolution of a range of legal and administrative issues, and reduce the workload on regional structures. According to war veterans and representatives of civil society organizations, Case Management Specialists are particularly valuable for persons with disabilities and for war veterans who do not have family support.

Respondents identify insufficient funding and inadequate professional training of specialists as key challenges, along with the excessive workload placed on each specialist, which naturally affects the quality of service delivery.

Among all respondents, only a few expressed a negative perception of the initiative, arguing that instead of creating an additional bureaucratic unit, efforts should focus on creating new opportunities for war veterans to independently and effectively exercise their rights.

Successful examples of veterans' policy implementation mentioned by respondents include:

- programmes providing free psychological and physical rehabilitation (including access to prosthetics, such as dental prosthetics, and rehabilitation centres); particular emphasis was placed on the construction of rehabilitation centres for war veterans
- the "Sport for All" programme, the development of adaptive sports, access to sports activities and gyms, and the allocation of funding for sports-related needs (sports programmes are generally considered among the most successful initiatives)
- the system of benefits and payments (most frequently mentioned in relation to utility services)
- the introduction of the institution of Case Management Specialists
- grant programmes for war veterans and support for veteran-owned businesses (frequently highlighted by war veterans themselves)
- access to education and/or employment for war veterans, including retraining programmes offered through Employment Centres
- local funding programmes linked to the involvement of philanthropists and civic activists
- local programmes for housing financing and adaptation, as well as land-related benefits
- the establishment of a "one-stop shop" for war veterans at Administrative Service Centres
- the creation of veterans' hubs within communities
- tuition compensation for the children of war veterans
- a pilot project on palliative care for war veterans
- projects implemented by the "Ukrainian Veterans Fund"

- the Strategy for the Development of Veterans Policy until 2030
- the “Superhumans” Centre, cited as an exemplary example of a highly effective project

Respondents also cited successful examples of regional veterans’ policy implementation, including:

- veterans’ spaces, including locally established initiatives (for example, the “Sercevir” Veterans Space, which combines an economic hub, a gym, and psychosocial support for war veterans)
- the work of the Veterans Affairs Department in Vinnytsia region, noted for its motivated team and the trust it enjoys within the community
- the work of the Veterans Affairs Unit under the Donetsk Regional State Administration, where case management approaches are actively applied, work with families is prioritized, and activities for war veterans are regularly organized.

Most surveyed Case Management Specialists and veterans’ policy experts noted that in their communities, veterans’ policy is implemented relatively effectively in relation to utility and transport benefits, as well as medical care and rehabilitation payments. In all positive cases, respondents emphasized the significant role and support of local community leadership. At the same time, it should be noted that activity in the field of veterans policy is often constrained by the availability – or lack – of financial resources, particularly with regard to housing programmes..

Interestingly, war veterans themselves tend to assess the implementation of veterans’ policy at the community level rather cautiously, most often describing it as average or neutral.

The above-mentioned examples are considered successful because they contribute to the integration of war veterans into civil society, support their adaptation, and enable their self-realization.

“Veterans have the right to live as part of society.”

R5, female, 34 years old, Dnipropetrovsk region (Case Management Specialist)

By contrast, respondents classified as “failed” those examples of veterans’ policy implementation that, in their view, do not correspond to the real needs of war veterans and face significant challenges in implementation and delivery, including:

- lack of access to sanatorium and resort treatment
- the National Military Memorial Complex
- the politicization of veteran status, whereby the status is used for personnel decisions or quota allocation
- housing programmes, including housing waiting lists (complex document collection and submission procedures, long waiting periods, and a limited range of eligible participants); the rent compensation project (overly strict requirements and misalignment with market prices); other housing provision programmes, which are viewed as less failed than underfunded
- failure to comply with regulations on the allocation of land plots to war veterans
- the “Affordable Medicines” programme, due to low uptake

- the procedure for undergoing the Military Medical Commission, which is perceived as non-transparent and highly exhausting
- insufficient inter-agency coordination and significant delays in responding to requests from war veterans (six months or longer), leading to loss of trust
- **the initial stage of implementing the institution of Case Management Specialists, when salaries were not paid and functions and workplaces were not clearly defined**
- insufficient attention to families of missing persons (lack of adequate psychological and material support) and indifference towards families of fallen service members.

Notably, only about half of respondents spoke about unsuccessful examples of veterans' policy implementation (most often representatives of civil society organizations), while the rest hesitated to provide a clear answer. Abstract responses were also present, according to which all initiatives that exist only "on paper" and are not implemented in practice are considered failures, without further specification.

Not all respondents were able to name successful examples of community-based initiatives for war veterans; however, among those mentioned, the following stand out:

- veterans' hubs and spaces that provide war veterans with legal, psychological, and rehabilitation counselling, including peer-to-peer formats
- the initiative of introducing Case Management Specialists for war veterans, which originated in the civil society sector
- the establishment of enterprises aimed at providing employment for war veterans with disabilities
- volunteer initiatives
- the activities of civil society organizations providing war veterans with legal, psychological, and informational support (including initiatives by the "Prostir Mozhlyvostei" CSO, in particular the "Coalition of Veterans' Spaces" project, which brings together more than twenty veterans organizations across Ukraine and facilitates experience-sharing and effective support for war veterans and their family members; the "Come Back Alive" Foundation; "Legal Hundred"; "Advokatsiia"; "Invictus Games"; "Prostir Vilnykh Liudei"; "Pryntsy"; "Help the Heroes"; "Dream of Ukraine's Children"; "Children of Heroes"; "Titans UA"; "Staleyvi Kulyk"; "Do Peremohy"; "Rukh Yanholy"; the 25th Airborne Sicheslav Brigade Foundation; "Petanque for Veterans" (Nova Ukraine Foundation); the Leadership Centre at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy; and "New Run" initiatives)
- the initiative to rename Trolleybusna Street in Lviv in honour of Bohdan Krylii, a civic activist – successfully implemented through the joint efforts of the veterans' organizations "Courage, Honour, Law" and "Veteran's Assistant"
- initiatives led by war veterans who establish their own businesses or organize various activities, particularly sports-related events
- the "Rivne Unity" charity fair, which brought together war veterans and their family members (servicemen had the opportunity to promote their own businesses)
- sports initiatives, competitions, and recreational programmes
- retraining courses for war veterans and admission quotas to educational institutions

- CSOs working with issues related to missing persons
- veterans' communities established by war veterans themselves, considered among the most effective initiatives and those that enjoy the greatest trust among former service members
- civil society organizations and church communities in Volyn region that organize rehabilitation trips and recreational activities for war veterans and their families, including trips to the mountains or abroad.

“Veterans’ spaces are places where a veteran can come and be among their own, where they are understood.”

R10, female, 49 years old, Donetsk region (CSO representative)

Respondents' views on whether current state policy corresponds to the actual needs of war veterans are divided.

A smaller proportion of respondents generally believe that current policy largely meets the existing needs of war veterans, noting the continuous updating of the regulatory framework, the implementation of a wide range of programmes, and the expansion of inter-institutional cooperation. They also point to positive dynamics, emphasizing that the state now provides better support to war veterans than in the past (including access to benefits, rehabilitation, education, grants for business start-ups, and employment support).

However, the majority of respondents (including most war veterans) believe that current policy does not fully meet existing needs and rate it at 5 out of 10. In their view, the state has declared too many obligations that it is unable to fulfil in full due to a combination of objective constraints (limited resources) and subjective factors (the human factor).

“Even if it does correspond, the instruments for its implementation are insufficient.”

R4, male, 47 years old, Chernihiv region (CSO representative)

At the same time, respondents unanimously agree that responsibility for **addressing the challenges faced by war veterans should primarily lie with the state**, as it is the state that sends individuals to serve in the military and must ensure their physical, mental, and economic recovery and adaptation after returning from the war. Nevertheless, respondents do not absolve civil society organizations, Case Management Specialists, or war veterans themselves of responsibility.

“I believe the state should be responsible, because this person went to war and, so to speak, fulfilled their duty to the state. From their side, the veteran did everything possible, and therefore expects the maximum in return from the state as well.”

R5, male, 35 years old, Kyiv (war veteran)

With regard to whether the state will be able to meet the needs of war veterans in the future, Case Management Specialists tend to be more optimistic. They express hope for improved attitudes towards war veterans, the enhancement of support and assistance programmes, and the provision of services to veterans at the highest possible standard. To a large extent, the future of war veterans will depend on the state's ability to create opportunities for independent income generation, given that economic constraints may limit the state's capacity to provide comprehensive support on its own.

Experts in the field of veterans' policy are more skeptical, more often predicting a very large scale of challenges after the end of the war. In their view, a clear distribution of responsibility between the state, civil society, charitable and international organizations, as well as society at large and the private sector, will be critically important.

The views of war veterans themselves are similarly polarized. The issue remains highly debatable, as in the future *"nearly everyone will be a veteran"*, which will create an enormous burden and require substantial effort and resources.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the results of the quantitative and qualitative surveys of war veterans and experts, together with data from the survey of Administrative Service Centre (ASC) staff, makes it possible to form a comprehensive picture of the current state of veterans' support.

Quantitative data indicate that war veterans are generally satisfied with their housing conditions and mental health; however, they assess their physical health and financial situation significantly more negatively. The main challenges faced when returning to civilian life include lack of understanding from society, difficulties in accessing social benefits, employment challenges, and limited access to medical and psychological services. War veterans express a critical assessment of state performance, particularly the activities of the Government and the Verkhovna Rada, and rate the implementation of veterans' policy as below average, especially in the area of housing provision. At the same time, war veterans identify medical care, rehabilitation, and social protection as their highest priorities, underscoring the need to strengthen state support in these areas.

The quality of medical and social services is assessed as average, with notable variation across different types of support. Primary healthcare receives relatively high ratings, while psychological support remains the weakest component. Social services are also uneven: basic benefits, such as discounts on public transport and utility payments, function relatively effectively, whereas employment programmes, support for veteran-owned businesses, assistance to families, and home care services require substantial strengthening.

A significant proportion of war veterans actively engage with ASCs and other public institutions, rating staff professionalism and the quality of consultations highly. However, bureaucratic procedures, complex documentation requirements, and long queues limit the effectiveness of service delivery.

The survey of ASC staff indicates a high level of professional competence in working with war veterans. Most staff members have between one and three years of experience serving war veterans and consult between 10 and 30 veterans per month. The main challenges in working with war veterans relate to clients' emotional states and the lack of timely and up-to-date information from public authorities. According to ASC staff, the most frequent requests concern obtaining UBD status and disability status resulting from the war, benefits, social payments, housing programmes, and one-off payments. Refusals to provide services are rare and are mainly due to incomplete or non-compliant documentation.

ASC staff rate the performance of their institutions highly, noting that available resources are generally sufficient to serve war veterans. At the same time, they support the idea of establishing specialized units or dedicated specialists to work specifically with war veterans. Most respondents have already undergone specialized training on interaction with war veterans and consider such training useful, while also emphasizing the need for regular professional development. The survey confirms that priority areas for service improvement include simplifying documentation procedures, expanding online services, and increasing remuneration for specialists.

Qualitative research adds depth to the quantitative findings by highlighting a wide range of needs expressed by war veterans and their families, including information on rights and benefits, legal support, assistance with obtaining

statuses and documentation, access to medical and psychological services, social integration, education, employment, and housing and land-related issues.

The findings demonstrate that, despite the existence of state initiatives and pilot projects, many issues remain unresolved due to bureaucracy, limited resources, and a lack of systemic approaches, particularly in remote communities.

A positive development observed since 2022 is the increase in the number of support programmes, enhanced cooperation between the state, business, and civil society, as well as growing initiative among war veterans themselves in terms of self-support, physical activity, and the development of their own projects.

Access to and quality of medical services have improved significantly due to the expansion of service packages, the opening of new rehabilitation centres, free rehabilitation programmes, and the digitalization of processes. At the same time, social and legal services remain difficult to navigate due to bureaucratic barriers, insufficient professional competence, and limited resources.

For war veterans, access to basic benefits and statuses that directly affect daily life is particularly important, including UBD status, disability status, utility benefits, medical care, rehabilitation, sanatorium treatment, psychological support, housing, rent compensation, free education for themselves and their children, as well as grants and employment programmes. However, a number of benefits and programmes prove to be ineffective or difficult to use due to bureaucracy, insufficient funding, and uneven implementation, including vehicle provision programmes, the “Affordable Medicines” programme, sanatorium treatment, and housing compensation mechanisms.

War veterans face challenges related to the accessibility and transparency of social services, often spending significant time and resources on documentation while not always achieving the expected outcomes. In addition to material support, war veterans emphasize the importance of feeling supported and acknowledged, which contributes to emotional stability and social integration. The main barriers include excessive bureaucracy, complex procedures, a shortage of competent specialists, and limited resources.

To improve the situation, war veterans and experts propose simplifying and standardizing procedures, increasing access to housing and legal support, developing a unified electronic veterans' account, establishing veterans' hubs and multidisciplinary teams, strengthening employment and veteran business support programmes, and enhancing the professionalism and empathy of public sector staff.

State policy has significant potential for improvement provided that coordination between central and local authorities, civil society, and war veterans is strengthened, funding is increased, the regulatory framework is systematized, and access to services is expanded.

Based on the results of the quantitative and qualitative surveys of war veterans, experts, and ASC staff, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Simplification of procedures and documentation requirements: reduce bureaucracy in obtaining statuses, benefits, social payments, housing and land-related support, and ensure greater transparency and accessibility of procedures.

- Expansion of digital services: develop a unified electronic veterans' account, further expand online services, and integrate them with ASCs and other public institutions.
- Strengthening housing support: increase funding for housing programmes, simplify eligibility criteria, expand the categories of war veterans eligible for housing support, and ensure access to compensation and credit mechanisms.
- Enhancement of medical and psychological support: improve access to primary and specialized healthcare, further develop psychological and rehabilitation services, and ensure regular social support for war veterans and their families.
- Development of social and family support: provide comprehensive social services, assistance to war veterans' families, child support, home care services, and community integration programmes.
- Improvement of legal and informational support: expand access to free legal consultations, systematize and monitor the quality of legal assistance, and ensure case support for issues related to documentation, statuses, and benefits.
- Strengthening the capacity and resources of ASC staff: provide regular training, establish dedicated specialists or units for working with war veterans, ensure fair remuneration, and expand resources for effective service delivery.
- Improved information and communication: ensure systematic communication with war veterans regarding their rights, benefits, and available programmes, provide consultations, and raise awareness of social, housing, and medical services.

ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON VETERANS' POLICY

The issue of social protection for war veterans in Ukraine has gained particular relevance since the start of the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation in 2022. As of 2025, the Unified State Register of War Veterans contains data on more than 1.3 million individuals holding UBD status. According to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, following the end of the war, the number of people falling within the scope of state veterans' policy – including family members – is expected to increase to between five and six million. This dynamic creates unprecedented pressure on the social protection system and highlights the urgent need to ensure effective mechanisms for the provision of state support.

The system of social guarantees for war veterans covers a wide range of services, including healthcare, housing support programmes, professional retraining, psychological rehabilitation, financial assistance, and others. Administrative Service Centres (ASCs) play a key role in delivering part of these services, particularly in receiving documentation, providing consultations, and ensuring access to administrative procedures. Accordingly, assessing the effectiveness of ASCs and identifying barriers to war veterans' access to relevant services is an important task for improving the quality and accessibility of such services.

At the desk research stage, the results of previous studies examining war veterans' experiences in accessing benefits and social services, their level of awareness of available opportunities, and the barriers encountered when applying for social support were synthesized. The review covers both Ukrainian studies conducted over different periods (from 2016 to 2024) and international research, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of systemic issues and common challenges in the field of social support for war veterans.

Service Provision to War Veterans through ASCs. The study “Service Provision to War Veterans through ASCs” (PROSTO, 2024) presents a systematic overview of public services available to war veterans through the network of Administrative Service Centres. The report provides a detailed list of services offered to war veterans via ASCs as of 2024, including both nationally funded services and those financed from local budgets. The study also includes case studies of service delivery to war veterans and an analysis of the most in-demand public services among this population group.

Legal Needs of War Veterans: A Comprehensive Approach. The report “Legal Needs of War Veterans” (UNDP, 2024) is based on in-depth interviews with staff of free legal aid centres, as well as individual interviews with war veterans and their family members. The study includes a literature review on the legal needs of war veterans and examines in detail the challenges related to obtaining services and UBD status (p. 33). A particular focus is placed on barriers to seeking assistance (p. 48), which is critical for understanding the reasons behind incomplete coverage of war veterans by state support programmes.

Needs and Awareness of War Veterans. The large-scale study “Assessment of the Needs of War Veterans of Ukraine” (Kantar for Legal Hundred, 2019) involved an online survey using a non-probability sample and covered a wide range of issues. The research examined war veterans' awareness of their rights and benefits, including sources of information and its perceived adequacy. Special attention was paid to the benefits used by war veterans, applying

both prompted awareness (where respondents were presented with a list of benefits) and spontaneous awareness (where respondents named benefits independently). The study also analyzed experiences of using different benefits and identified those considered irrelevant by respondents. A comprehensive review of benefits was conducted, with segmentation ranging from widely used benefits to those targeting narrow groups of war veterans.

A second major study by the same organization – “Assessment of the Needs of War Veterans of Ukraine” (2019) – focused on the socio-economic needs and experiences of benefit use among different categories of Ukrainian war veterans. The quantitative sociological survey covered 1,215 war veterans in 11 cities across Ukraine, including ATO/JFO participants, persons with disabilities resulting from the war, Afghanistan war veterans, and individuals affected by the Revolution of Dignity. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using tablet devices.

Respondents were asked who they believe should be considered a war veteran, whether their rights as war veterans had been violated, whether they know how to protect their rights, which benefits they use or would like to use, how they assess the quality of these benefits, which sources they use to obtain information about their rights, whether they experienced employment-related challenges due to their veteran status, and which organizations they turn to for assistance.

War Veterans’ Path after Service Completion. The study “The Path of War Veterans” (Veteran Hub, 2024), based on in-depth interviews with war veterans, provides a detailed examination of the “legal security” stage, which includes accessing benefits and services after completion of service (p. 153). This qualitative research offers insights into the personal experiences of war veterans navigating the social protection system and identifies specific barriers at different stages of the documentation process.

The study “From Injury to Return” (Principle CSO, 2023), also based on in-depth interviews with war veterans and their family members, includes a detailed though concise section on benefits and access to them (pp. 99–103). The research provides insights into the practical experience of moving from injury to return to civilian life and the role of the social support system in this process.

The Role of the State in Reintegration. The report “The Role of the State in the Social Reintegration of War Veterans” (Ukrainian Veterans Fund, 2024), based on focus group discussions, concisely yet substantively addresses issues related to accessing benefits (pp. 16-18). The focus group methodology enabled the identification of shared challenges and recurring patterns across different groups of war veterans.

Discrimination and Barriers to Accessing Services. The study “Discrimination of Different Social Groups in the Armed Forces of Ukraine” (Ukrainian Veterans Fund, 2023) combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. The report highlights challenges related to accessing social assistance and formulates practical recommendations to address them. This study is particularly valuable as it examines social protection through the lens of potential discrimination against specific categories of service members.

Standards and European Practices. The study “Social Protection of Female and Male War Veterans: Analysis of Existing Standards, Review of European Practices, and Development of Recommendations” (Legal Hundred, 2024) presents an overview of programmes and benefits and the state of their implementation, primarily from a legal perspective (pp. 13-28). The report references a limited number of empirical studies in this area, underscoring the importance of further research. An analytical report by the National Institute for Strategic Studies (2025) addresses

issues related to social protection and the catalogue of benefits (p. 38), as well as improvements in the process of obtaining UBD status (p. 39).

Surveys Conducted via the “Diia” Application. The large-scale survey “Accessibility and Effectiveness: Results of a Large-Scale Survey of War Veterans via “Diia” (USP) focuses on analyzing the experiences of Ukrainian war veterans in accessing public services through the “Diia” application, as well as the barriers they encounter. The main emphasis is placed on accessibility, effectiveness, and user convenience of state services.

War veterans most frequently accessed medical and rehabilitation services (21.2%), veterans sports services (18.4%), financial support (15.5%), and employment assistance (14.1%). The most common barriers included long queues and bureaucracy (29.8%), difficulties in collecting certificates (16.1%), lack of clear information (15.1%), and inconsistent procedures (13.1%).

The primary sources of information about opportunities and services were social media (41.7%) and the “Diia” application (37.7%). Case Management Specialists (4.4%) and veterans or volunteer organizations (3.7%) were mentioned less frequently.

Early Research on ATO/JFO Veterans. The study “Problems of Anti-Terrorist Operation Veterans in Eastern Ukraine” (2016) focused on a sociological analysis of the challenges faced by ATO/JFO veterans after returning from the combat zone. The aim was to examine the problems encountered by ATO veterans and assess the effectiveness of state support.

The questionnaire included key issues such as challenges experienced after returning from ATO/JFO (open-ended question); current employment status compared to pre-ATO/JFO participation; self-assessment of health compared to peers; the impact of ATO/JFO participation on health; awareness, use, and satisfaction with state programmes and benefits, including healthcare, transport benefits, utility discounts, land allocation, and retraining programmes.

International Experience: Non-use of Support Programmes. The study “Going It Alone: Post-9/11 Veteran Nonuse of Healthcare and Social Service Programs During Their Early Transition to Civilian Life” explores why a significant proportion of US veterans who recently left service do not seek assistance through social and healthcare programmes during the first three months after returning to civilian life.

The research was conducted as part of The Veterans Metrics Initiative (TVMI) and covered 8,237 respondents who had left service within the previous 90 days (August–November 2016). The survey was conducted via postal and online methods.

The study focused on four wellbeing domains: employment, health, legal–financial–housing, and social wellbeing. In each domain, war veterans were asked whether they had used at least one programme or service in the previous three months. Employment-related services included job placement programmes, career counselling, education and training, mentoring, civilian skills retraining, and job search resources. Health-related services included Veterans Health Administration services, private healthcare, military health insurance, alternative medicine, psychological therapy, wellness programmes, addiction treatment, sleep support, and preventive health services. Legal, financial, and housing services included rental and mortgage assistance, financial education, legal aid, debt relief programmes, and

preferential insurance or banking products. Social services included veteran peer programmes, family support groups, volunteer or community integration initiatives, civilian transition support programmes, and veteran-focused events.

War Veterans in Higher Education. An Australian study (Veterans Studies, 2019) presented the first large-scale national research analyzing access, transition, and experiences of Australian war veterans within the higher education system. The study identified numerous barriers faced by war veterans, including social, psychological, and academic challenges.

The methodology included a descriptive national mixed-methods survey of 240 war veterans enrolled in higher education institutions in Australia. An online questionnaire hosted on the Qualtrics platform was developed with the involvement of the Australian Student Veterans Association (ASVA). The questionnaire covered experiences of admission to higher education institutions, transition from military service to study, perceived support and adaptation within universities, participation in and assessment of ASVA activities, and advice for future student war veterans.

The analysis of the reviewed studies identified several key thematic areas and conclusions regarding war veterans' experiences in accessing social assistance and services through ASCs:

- demand for services, quality of service provision, and levels of user satisfaction; barriers to accessing social services and support mechanisms.
- information awareness among war veterans, including channels for obtaining information on rights, benefits, and social protection mechanisms.
- the institutional role of Administrative Service Centres (ASCs), including the effectiveness and accessibility of services delivered through the ASC network.
- reintegration trajectories, including stages of transition from military service to civilian life and the specific needs at each stage.

The findings of the reviewed studies indicate the need for a comprehensive approach to improving the system of service provision for war veterans. Critical issues include simplifying bureaucratic procedures, improving information dissemination through multiple channels, reducing waiting times, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and addressing the specific needs of different groups of war veterans. International experience also underscores the importance of addressing psychological barriers to seeking assistance and creating a trust-based environment for war veterans during the process of accessing social support.

APPENDICES

Table 1.

Question: Overall, how would you rate your...?

Distribution by macro-region, gender, disability, income level, and presence of children. The results are presented as an average value on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is terrible and 5 is excellent.	Macro-region				Gender		Disability		Income level			Presence of children	
	West	Centre	Border	Frontline	Male	Female	Have a disability	Do not have disability	Poor	Low-income	Average level	Have children	Do not have children
Physical health	3,1	2,9	2,6	2,9	2,9	2,9	2,7	3,1	2,6	3,1	3,0	3,0	2,8
Mental health	3,4	3,2	3,0	2,9	3,2	3,0	3,1	3,3	3,0	3,3	3,5	3,2	3,2
Financial situation	3,0	2,6	2,6	2,8	2,8	2,7	2,7	2,9	2,2	2,9	3,4	2,9	2,7
Housing conditions	3,6	3,3	3,5	3,6	3,5	3,2	3,3	3,6	3,2	3,6	3,7	3,5	3,4

Table 2.

Question: How would you generally rate the performance of the following institutions in fulfilling their obligations toward veterans:

Distribution by macro-region, gender, disability, income level, and presence of children. The results are presented as an average value on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is terrible and 5 is excellent.	Macro-region				Gender		Disability		Income level			Presence of children	
	West	Centre	Border	Frontline	Male	Female	Have a disability	Do not have disability	Poor	Low-income	Average level	Have children	Do not have children
President	2,7	2,6	2,7	2,5	2,6	2,7	2,5	2,8	2,3	2,9	2,8	2,6	2,7
Verkhovna Rada	2,2	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,3	2,0	2,2	1,8	2,2	2,3	2,0	2,2
Cabinet of Ministers	2,2	2,0	2,1	1,9	2,0	2,4	2,0	2,2	1,7	2,3	2,3	2,1	2,1
Ministry of Veterans Affairs	3,0	2,8	2,7	3,0	2,9	2,9	2,8	3,0	2,6	3,0	3,2	2,9	2,9
Local authorities	2,9	2,6	2,7	2,6	2,7	2,7	2,6	2,8	2,6	2,7	3,1	2,7	2,7
Veterans' associations and organizations	3,5	3,4	3,3	3,5	3,4	3,5	3,5	3,4	3,2	3,5	3,7	3,5	3,4
Departments for veterans' policy	3,0	3,2	3,1	3,0	3,1	3,1	3,3	2,9	2,9	3,2	3,2	3,2	2,9

Table 3.

Question: Please rate how satisfied you are with the quality of implementation of the following areas of veteran policy:

Distribution by macro-region, gender, disability, income level, and presence of children. The results are presented as an average value on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is completely dissatisfied and 5 is completely satisfied.	Macro-region				Gender		Disability		Income level			Presence of children	
	West	Centre	Border	Frontline	Male	Female	Have a disability	Do not have disability	Poor	Low-income	Average level	Have children	Do not have children
Social protection (benefits, allowances)	3,1	2,7	3,1	2,7	2,9	2,8	2,8	3,0	2,8	3,1	2,8	3,0	2,9
Medical care and rehabilitation	3,2	2,8	3,0	2,9	2,9	3,1	3,0	3,0	2,6	3,1	3,4	3,0	2,9
Psychological support	2,9	2,7	2,7	2,5	2,8	2,6	2,6	2,8	2,7	2,7	2,9	2,7	2,8
Education and retraining	3,4	2,9	3,1	3,2	3,2	3,2	3,2	3,1	3,0	3,2	3,2	3,1	3,2
Employment support	2,7	2,5	2,5	2,2	2,5	2,6	2,6	2,5	2,1	2,7	2,8	2,4	2,7
Support for starting a business	3,0	3,0	3,1	2,1	2,9	2,8	2,9	2,8	2,5	3,0	3,0	2,8	3,0
Housing provision (rental compensation, preferential loans, land allocation)	2,3	2,1	2,3	2,2	2,3	1,9	2,3	2,2	1,8	2,3	2,8	2,1	2,3
Support for veterans' family	2,5	2,5	2,0	2,3	2,4	2,1	2,4	2,4	2,1	2,4	2,8	2,3	2,4
Commemoration and honouring of veterans	3,1	3,5	3,4	3,1	3,3	3,0	3,2	3,3	3,0	3,4	3,6	3,2	3,4

Table 4.

Question: How would you rate the quality of the following medical services for veterans:

Distribution by macro-region, gender, disability, income level, and presence of children. The results are presented as an average value on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is terrible and 5 is excellent.	Macro-region				Gender		Disability		Income level			Presence of children	
	West	Centre	Border	Frontline	Male	Female	Have a disability	Do not have disability	Poor	Low-income	Average level	Have children	Do not have children
Primary medical care (family doctor consultations)	3,6	3,7	3,3	3,6	3,7	3,2	3,7	3,5	3,4	3,7	3,5	3,6	3,6
Specialized medical care (specialist consultations)	3,2	3,3	3,3	2,8	3,3	2,9	3,3	3,1	2,9	3,4	3,0	3,2	3,2
Dental care	3,0	2,8	3,3	2,8	3,0	2,9	3,0	2,9	2,7	3,1	3,0	2,9	3,0
Inpatient care (hospitalization)	3,1	3,4	3,3	3,1	3,3	2,9	3,3	3,2	3,0	3,3	3,4	3,2	3,3
Rehabilitation and sanatorium treatment	2,9	3,0	2,8	2,8	2,9	2,9	3,0	2,8	2,7	3,0	3,1	2,8	3,0
Psychological assistance and support	2,8	2,8	2,6	2,7	2,7	2,8	2,8	2,7	2,6	2,8	3,0	2,6	2,8
"Affordable Medicines" program	2,8	3,1	2,2	2,6	2,8	2,6	2,8	2,8	2,3	3,1	3,0	2,7	2,9
Prosthetics and orthopaedics	3,0	2,8	3,3	2,7	3,0	2,9	3,1	2,8	2,7	3,0	3,3	2,9	3,0

Table 5.

Question: How would you rate the quality of the following types of social support for veterans:

Distribution by macro-region, gender, disability, income level, and presence of children. The results are presented as an average value on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is terrible and 5 is excellent.	Macro-region				Gender		Disability		Income level			Presence of children	
	West	Centre	Border	Frontline	Male	Female	Have a disability	Do not have disability	Poor	Low-income	Average level	Have children	Do not have children
Targeted financial assistance	2,6	2,9	3,1	3,0	2,9	2,5	2,9	2,8	2,6	2,9	3,1	2,7	3,0
Housing or land allocation	2,4	1,7	1,9	1,9	2,0	1,9	2,0	2,0	1,9	2,0	2,2	2,0	2,1
Home care and social support	2,4	2,1	2,5	2,5	2,4	2,2	2,2	2,4	2,0	2,5	2,4	2,3	2,4
Public transport discounts	4,0	3,9	4,0	4,0	4,0	3,9	4,0	3,9	3,7	4,0	4,2	4,0	3,9
Utility bill discounts	3,7	3,9	3,8	3,9	3,8	3,8	3,7	3,9	3,4	4,0	3,8	3,8	3,8
Education and retraining	3,4	3,5	3,4	3,3	3,5	3,1	3,4	3,4	3,3	3,4	3,6	3,4	3,4
Employment	2,8	2,8	2,8	2,2	2,8	2,5	2,6	2,8	2,4	2,9	3,0	2,6	2,8
Support for veteran entrepreneurship	2,9	2,9	2,9	2,6	2,9	2,7	3,0	2,8	2,7	2,9	3,0	2,8	2,9
Support for veterans' family	2,7	2,6	2,3	2,5	2,6	2,6	2,5	2,6	2,3	2,7	2,8	2,5	2,7
Commemoration and honouring	3,2	3,4	3,6	3,4	3,4	3,2	3,4	3,4	3,3	3,4	3,5	3,4	3,4

Table 6.

Question: Please rate the performance of the Administrative Service Centre according to the following criteria:

Distribution by macro-region, gender, disability, income level, and presence of children. The results are presented as an average value on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is terrible and 5 is excellent.	Macro-region				Gender		Disability		Income level			Presence of children	
	West	Centre	Border	Frontline	Male	Female	Have a disability	Do not have disability	Poor	Low-income	Average level	Have children	Do not have children
Speed and timeliness of service at the ASC	3,8	3,9	3,8	4,1	3,9	3,4	3,9	3,9	3,6	4,1	3,8	3,7	4,0
Convenience of working hours	4,0	4,1	3,8	4,1	4,1	3,6	4,0	4,0	3,9	4,1	4,0	4,0	4,1
Waiting time for results	3,6	3,8	3,6	3,8	3,8	3,1	3,7	3,7	3,6	3,8	3,6	3,6	3,9
Staff qualification level	3,8	4,2	4,2	4,2	4,1	3,9	4,0	4,2	3,9	4,3	4,0	4,0	4,2
Completeness and accessibility of provided consultation	3,9	4,1	4,0	4,2	4,1	3,9	4,0	4,1	3,9	4,1	4,2	4,0	4,2
Simplicity of required documentation package	3,5	3,6	3,5	3,7	3,6	3,2	3,6	3,5	3,4	3,8	3,4	3,3	3,8
Accessibility for persons with disabilities	3,4	3,7	3,8	3,4	3,6	3,3	3,5	3,7	3,5	3,6	3,7	3,5	3,6

Table 7.

Question: Rate your level of awareness regarding the procedure for obtaining/processing on a scale:

Distribution by macro-region, gender, disability, income level, and presence of children. The results are presented as an average value on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not aware at all" and 5 means "I am well informed."	Macro-region				Gender		Disability		Income level			Children	
	West	Centre	Border	Frontline	Male	Female	Have a disability	Do not have disability	Poor	Low-income	Average level	Have children	Do not have children
One-time monetary assistance in case of a veteran's death or disability	3,3	3,3	3,5	3,0	3,3	3,2	3,5	3,0	2,8	3,4	3,7	3,3	3,3
One-time Independence Day payment	3,4	3,6	4,2	4,0	3,7	3,5	3,7	3,7	3,6	3,6	4,1	3,8	3,6
Housing and utility payment benefits	3,7	4,0	4,4	4,1	4,0	4,1	3,9	4,1	3,8	4,1	4,1	4,1	3,9
Housing rent compensation	2,3	2,5	2,6	2,0	2,4	2,6	2,4	2,5	2,2	2,4	2,8	2,4	2,4
Monetary compensation instead of a sanatorium voucher for persons with disabilities	2,5	2,5	2,0	1,7	2,3	2,4	2,3	2,4	2,0	2,4	2,7	2,3	2,3
Fuel benefit for household needs	2,5	2,5	3,0	2,7	2,6	2,4	2,6	2,6	2,5	2,5	2,9	2,6	2,6
Extract from the Unified State Register of War Veterans (USRWV)	3,3	2,9	2,8	3,1	3,0	3,1	2,8	3,2	2,9	3,1	3,2	3,3	2,8
Combatant status and issuance of the corresponding ID	4,3	4,4	4,7	4,7	4,4	4,6	4,5	4,4	4,4	4,5	4,4	4,4	4,5
Status of a person with a war-related disability	3,8	3,8	3,7	3,5	3,7	3,7	4,3	3,1	3,8	3,7	3,7	3,6	3,8
Registration for housing provision or monetary compensation for housing purchase	2,8	2,5	2,5	2,4	2,6	2,7	2,6	2,5	2,6	2,4	3,0	2,6	2,5

Referrals for free medical examination, treatment, or rehabilitation	3,0	2,8	2,6	2,7	2,7	3,1	2,7	2,9	2,5	2,9	3,1	2,8	2,8
Land allocation for construction or agricultural use	3,2	3,2	3,3	2,9	3,2	3,3	3,4	3,0	3,1	3,2	3,3	3,2	3,2

Table 8.

Question: Please rate the accessibility of obtaining the following veteran services and documents:

Distribution by macro-region, gender, disability, income level, and presence of children. The results are presented as an average value on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is almost impossible and 5 is very easy.	Macro-region				Gender		Disability		Income level			Presence of children	
	West	Centre	Border	Frontline	Male	Female	Have a disability	Do not have disability	Poor	Low-income	Average level	Have children	Do not have children
One-time monetary assistance in case of a veteran's death or disability	3,1	2,9	3,0	3,2	3,1	2,9	3,0	3,0	2,9	3,2	2,8	3,0	3,1
One-time Independence Day payment	3,7	3,7	4,0	4,3	3,9	3,5	3,8	3,8	3,6	3,8	4,2	3,9	3,8
Housing and utility payment benefit	3,8	4,0	3,7	4,3	4,0	3,7	3,8	4,0	3,8	4,0	4,1	3,9	3,9
Housing rent compensation	2,8	2,9	2,1	2,6	2,8	2,3	2,6	2,7	2,3	2,7	3,1	2,6	2,7
Monetary compensation instead of a sanatorium voucher for persons with disabilities	3,0	2,4	2,1	2,9	2,7	2,5	2,5	2,8	2,2	2,7	3,5	2,6	2,7
Fuel benefit for household needs	2,9	2,9	2,7	3,2	3,0	2,4	2,8	2,9	2,5	3,1	3,1	2,7	3,0
Extract from the Unified State Register of War Veterans (USRVV)	3,9	3,8	3,7	4,1	3,9	3,8	3,9	3,9	3,7	4,0	3,9	4,0	3,7

Combatant status and issuance of the corresponding ID	3,8	3,5	3,8	3,7	3,7	3,6	3,7	3,6	3,5	3,8	3,9	3,6	3,8
Status of a person with a war-related disability	3,7	2,9	3,3	3,8	3,4	3,3	3,5	3,1	3,1	3,4	3,6	3,3	3,4
Registration for housing provision or monetary compensation for housing purchase	2,7	2,3	2,2	2,4	2,4	2,5	2,4	2,5	2,1	2,5	2,9	2,5	2,4
Referrals for free medical examination, treatment, or rehabilitation	3,4	2,9	2,8	3,7	3,1	3,5	3,0	3,3	2,8	3,2	3,5	3,2	3,1
Land allocation for construction or agricultural use	2,3	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,2	2,3	2,2	2,3	2,1	2,3	2,5	2,3	2,2

Table 9.

Question: Please rate the effectiveness (how much this service / procedure / document helps veterans) ...?

Distribution by macro-region, gender, disability, income level, and presence of children. The results are presented as an average value on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is completely ineffective and 5 is very effective.	Macro-region				Gender		Disability		Income level			Children	
	West	Centre	Border	Frontline	Male	Female	Have a disability	Do not have disability	Poor	Low-income	Average level	Have children	Do not have children
One-time monetary assistance in case of a veteran's death or disability	4,2	3,8	4,1	4,0	4,0	3,9	4,0	4,0	3,8	4,1	4,1	4,0	4,0
One-time Independence Day payment	4,0	3,5	3,6	3,9	3,8	3,7	3,8	3,7	3,7	3,6	4,3	3,7	3,8
Housing and utility payment benefit	4,1	3,8	3,9	4,0	3,9	4,1	3,9	4,0	3,8	4,0	4,1	4,0	4,0
Housing rent compensation	3,8	3,8	3,2	3,6	3,7	3,5	3,7	3,6	3,3	3,7	4,2	3,6	3,7

Monetary compensation instead of a sanatorium voucher for persons with disabilities	4,0	3,4	3,8	3,1	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,8	3,5	3,7	4,1	3,7	3,7
Fuel benefit for household needs	4,2	3,8	3,7	3,5	3,9	4,0	3,9	4,0	3,6	3,9	4,4	3,6	4,2
Extract from the Unified State Register of War Veterans (USRWV)	4,2	4,0	4,3	4,5	4,2	4,1	4,2	4,3	3,9	4,3	4,4	4,1	4,3
Combatant status and issuance of the corresponding ID	4,5	4,2	4,0	4,4	4,3	4,4	4,3	4,3	4,1	4,4	4,6	4,3	4,3
Status of a person with a war-related disability	4,4	4,1	4,3	4,1	4,2	4,2	4,2	4,3	3,9	4,3	4,6	4,2	4,2
Registration for housing provision or monetary compensation for housing purchase	4,0	3,7	3,5	3,0	3,8	3,4	3,6	3,8	3,3	3,8	4,0	3,7	3,7
Referrals for free medical examination, treatment, or rehabilitation	4,1	4,0	3,9	3,7	4,0	4,1	3,8	4,1	3,7	4,0	4,2	4,0	4,0
Land allocation for construction or agricultural use	3,9	3,4	3,1	2,8	3,5	3,6	3,5	3,5	3,2	3,4	4,1	3,6	3,4

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