



# Fact Sheet

SOCIAL SECURITY

## **Military Veterans Who Receive Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits <sup>1</sup>**

Social Security has covered earnings from active duty military service since 1957. Veterans can receive disability insurance benefits in addition to service-connected disability insurance benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Receipt of service-connected disability insurance benefits does not affect disability insurance benefits for veterans.

- Approximately 953,000 military veterans received disability insurance benefits in 2016.
- The median annual personal income level for veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2016 was \$21,672, while the mean income level was \$31,663.
- Social Security constituted at least 75 percent of personal income for 52 percent of veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2016.
- Among veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2016, 12 percent were in poverty. If Social Security income were not included, 51 percent would have been poor.
- Among veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2016, 26 percent had family income below 150 percent of the poverty level. If Social Security income were not included, 59 percent would have had family income below 150 percent of the poverty level.
- The aggregate annual poverty gap for veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2016 was approximately \$5.2 billion when family income did not include Social Security benefits compared to \$532 million with Social Security included in family income. The poverty gap measures the dollar amount of additional income necessary to lift members of a group to just above the poverty level.
- Approximately 3 percent of veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2016 did not have health insurance. Disability insurance beneficiaries are eligible for Medicare, but only after a two-year waiting period.

- In 2016, about 5 percent of veterans receiving disability insurance benefits also received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. SSI is a program that provides additional income to families with low income and limited resources.

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1 Estimates are based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) merged with Social Security Administration data for individuals who received a payment in any month of 2016 and who did not live in an institutional setting at the time of the survey (March 2017). Social Security disability insurance beneficiaries include disabled workers, disabled widow(er)s, and disabled adult children, who receive payments from the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance Trust Funds. Social Security income refers to all payments received from these trust funds. For additional information on data and methods, please contact [research@ssa.gov](mailto:research@ssa.gov).