



# 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. The percentage of veterans receiving disability insurance benefits has grown from 2.9 percent in 1992 to 6.7 percent in 2008.<sup>2</sup>

- Approximately 961,000 military veterans received disability insurance benefits in 2013.
- The median annual personal income level for veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2013 was \$23,410, while the mean income level was \$30,200.
- Disability insurance benefits constituted at least 75 percent of personal income for 49 percent of veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2013.
- Among veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2013, 9 percent were in poverty. If disability insurance benefits were not included, 43 percent would have been poor.
- Among veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2013, 23 percent had family income below 150 percent of the poverty level. If disability insurance benefits were not included, 52 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 2013 was approximately \$4.1 billion when family income did not include disability insurance benefits compared to \$370 million with disability insurance benefits 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 7 percent of veterans receiving disability insurance benefits in 2013 did not have health insurance. Disability insurance beneficiaries are eligible for Medicare, but only after a two-year waiting period.

- In 2013, about 3 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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<sup>1</sup> Estimates are based on the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) merged with Social Security Administration data for individuals who received a payment in their final interview month (between January and July of 2013). Social Security disability insurance benefits include disabled worker, disabled widow(er), and disabled adult child benefits paid from the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance Trust Funds. For additional information on data and methods, please see: <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/rsnotes/rsn2014-02.html>.

<sup>2</sup> The Use of VA Disability benefits and Social Security Disability Insurance Among Veterans <http://crr.bc.edu/working-papers/the-use-of-va-disability-benefits-and-social-security-disability-insurance-among-veterans/>