Veterans in STEM

In 2021, military veterans had a lower employment rate (77%) than nonveterans (81%). For those that were employed, a higher proportion of military veterans were employed in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) occupations (32%) than nonveterans (24%) (Table LBR-A). This higher percentage of veterans in STEM occupations was related to a higher percentage of them in STEM middle-skill occupations (15%) and S&E occupations (9%) when compared to nonveterans (9% and 6%, respectively) (Figure LBR-B). The majority of veterans (65%) did not have a bachelor's degree or higher. Still, a higher percentage of veterans without a bachelor's degree or higher held STEM middle-skill occupations (20%) than nonveterans (13%) (Table LBR-A).

Table LBR-A

Select characteristics of veterans and nonveterans: 2021

(Number, percent, and years)

Select characteristics	Nonveteran	Veteran
Employment		
Number	179,242,246	9,170,862
Employment rate (%)	81.1	76.5
Number of employed	145,350,651	7,016,924
Percent working in STEM occupations	23.8	32.2
Educational attainment among the employed (%)		
With a bachelor's degree or higher	39.0	35.4
STEM occupations	29.5	33.1
S&E occupations	12.2	15.5
S&E-related occupations	14.4	12.6
STEM middle-skill occupations	2.9	5.0
Without a bachelor's degree	61.0	64.6
STEM occupations	20.1	31.7
S&E occupations	2.1	5.3
S&E-related occupations	5.4	5.9
STEM middle-skill occupations	12.6	20.5
Median age of the employed (years)		
All occupations	41	51
STEM occupations	40	50
S&E occupations	39	49
S&E-related occupations	41	50
STEM middle-skill occupations	41	50

S&E = science and engineering; STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
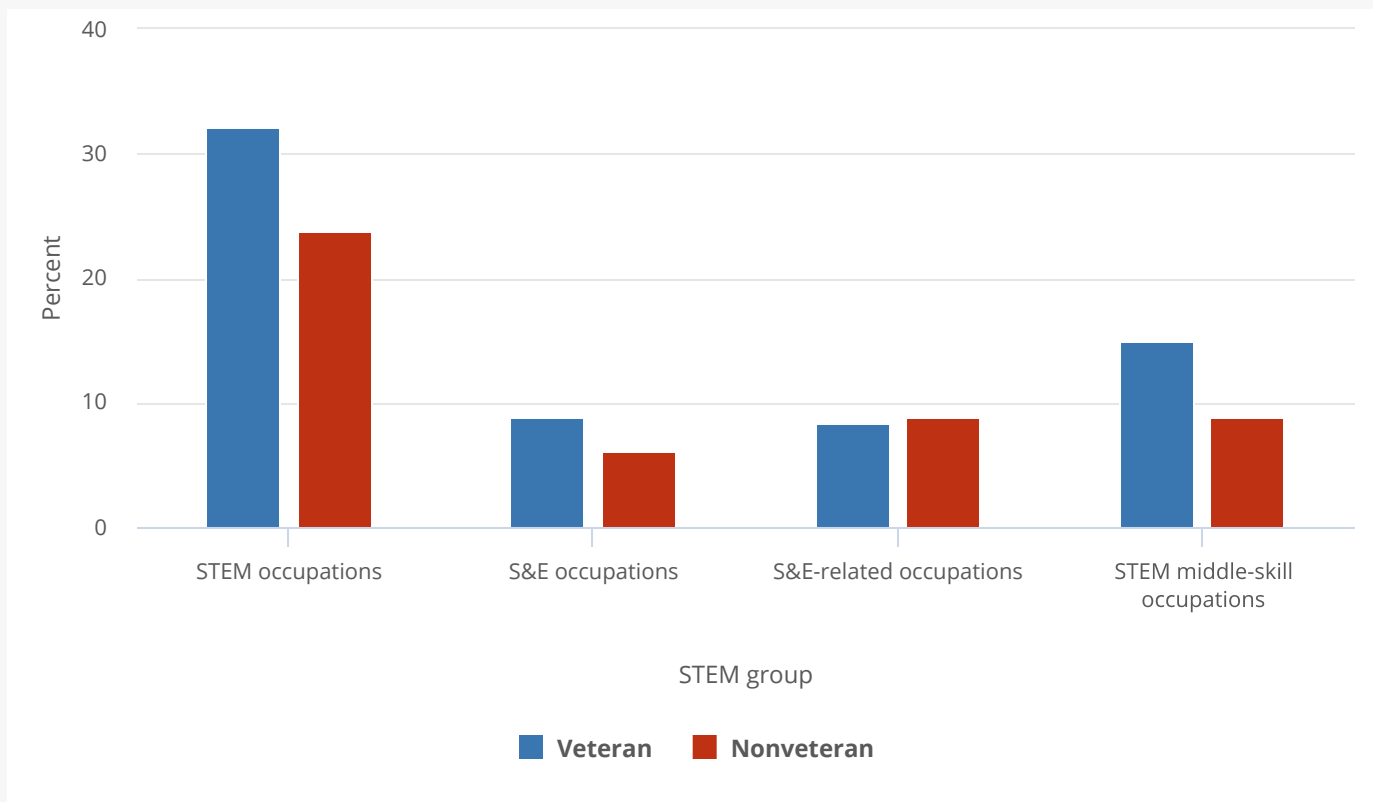
Note(s):
Data include the civilian, non-institutionalized population ages 16–75 and exclude those with military occupations, those missing occupation data, and those currently enrolled in primary or secondary school. Employment rate is calculated among all eligible persons. Other estimates are calculated only among eligible persons who are currently employed.

Source(s):
Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2021, 1-Year Public-Use File.

Science and Engineering Indicators

Figure LBR-B

Workers employed in STEM, by veteran status: 2021

S&E = science and engineering; STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Note(s):
Data include the employed, civilian, non-institutionalized population ages 16–75 and exclude currently enrolled in primary or secondary school. Non-STEM occupations are not shown. Percentages are taken among 145,350,651 nonveterans and 7,016,924 veterans.

Source(s):
Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 1-Year Public-Use File, 2021, data as of October 2022.

Science and Engineering Indicators

The federal government employed a large percentage of veterans across all three STEM groups. For example, 21% of all veterans in S&E occupations worked for the federal government, compared with 6% of nonveterans. Among veterans in STEM middle-skill occupations, 8% were employed by the federal government, compared with 2% of comparable nonveterans. Among veterans employed in S&E-related occupations, 15% worked in the federal government, compared with only 3% of nonveterans employed in S&E-related occupations (Table SLBR-B).

Among federal STEM workers, both veterans and nonveterans were about equally represented in S&E and S&E-related occupations, while veterans worked in STEM middle-skill occupations at a ratio of about five veterans for every three nonveterans (Table SLBR-C). Among workers in for-profit companies, veterans were employed at higher rates in both S&E (9%) and STEM middle-skill (17%) occupations than nonveterans. The same is true among workers in nonprofit establishments, where veterans were employed more frequently in S&E (7%) and STEM middle-skill (7%) occupations than nonveterans.